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ABSTRACT

This analysis of the Boston (Massachusetts) Public School System considers ways of advancing the opportunity for parent choice of school and program, and ways of breaking the bureaucratic culture of big-city American public schools to introduce a culture promoting innovation and experiment. The Boston public schools system, like large urban districts everywhere, is in trouble, facing low achievement, high dropout rates, white flight, the threat of violence, and administrative problems. Nevertheless, there are outposts of hope in the system's 117 schools, and a growing consensus exists on the necessity of serious reform. This study combines an analysis of school and staff documents, a review of secondary materials, and reports from other districts and leading educators, with data from 50 interviews of Boston administrators and teachers. All evidence points to institutionalized gridlock in the system. Chapters 1 and 2 examine major reform efforts in terms of school choice and school-based management, while Chapter 3 reviews the importance of a vital school culture and community. Chapter 4 examines the role of leadership, and Chapter 5 proposes a plan for encouraging such leadership. Chapter 6 urges a core curriculum. Chapter 7 reviews the budget and effective spending, and Chapters 8 and 9 review mandated special education and bilingual education. Chapter 10 analyzes current school staffing needs. (SLD)

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REINVENTING THE SCHOOLS

A RADICAL PLAN FOR BOSTON

[illegible] F. WILSON

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REINVENTING THE SCHOOLS

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A Radical Plan for Boston

STEVEN F. WILSON

Pioneer Institute
Boston, Massachusetts

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ix
Nathan Glazer
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS xi
PREFACE xiv

1. School Choice 1
2. School-Based Management 38
3. Subscription and Community in Schools 64
4. School Entrepreneurship 84
5. Transforming Boston's Schools 113
6. The Core Curriculum and Assessment 144
7. The Budget and Effective Spending 155
8. Special Education 198
9. Bilingual Education 233
10. Personnel 269

AFTERWORD 301
NOTES 305
INDEX 335

INTRODUCTION

WITH THIS BOOK Steven Wilson advances the discussion of two key issues in American education: How does one advance the opportunity for choice of school and program for parents? How does one break the bureaucratic culture of big-city American public schools, and introduce a culture that promotes innovation and experiment? There have been important works bearing on both issues by James Coleman, John Chubb and Terry Moe, and others, but no one has brought to these issues a detailed analysis of a single public school system, and tried to work out how an approach emphasizing choice and entrepreneurial energy could be introduced. The system Steven Wilson has analyzed is the Boston Public Schools. It has been a deeply troubled system for at least 20 years, and many books have been written about its troubles. It has undergone large changes in governance over that period, but the level of public dissatisfaction with the schools has not been affected by these changes. Clearly something more radical is necessary, and Wilson does not shirk the job of defining and specifying how a new approach, tapping the energies that exist among Boston's teachers, principals, and administrators, could be introduced. Three things mark this book as unique in the flood of analyses and proposals on America's public schools: First is the detailed analysis of the Boston public school system, its personnel, its programs, its mode of operation, and how it spends its money. For this alone the book is a major contribution. Second is the knowledge of the private sector and the way it operates that Wilson brings to his proposal. The private, profit-making sector is very different from the public schools, and no direct transfer from one to the other is possible, yet the private sector draws strength from a dynamic crucially important for the betterment of public schools: success is rewarded, failure brings an automatic judgment and conclusion and the release of resources for something that might work better. The third is the pragmatic application of the principles that have given entrepreneurship its current enormous prestige to the special problems of public education in Boston. This book will have to be taken seriously by everyone involved in public education.

Nathan Glazer

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MY GREATEST DEBT is to the Boston teachers, principals and administrators who generously gave of their time to be interviewed for this book: Daniel R. Burke, William Dandridge, Mary Brown Daniels, Catherine Ellison, Elliot Feldman, Barbara E. Fields, Michael Fung, Charlotte Harris, William Henderson, Stephen C. Holt, Richard Jacobs, Muriel J. Leonard, Steven Leonard, M. Kim Marshall, Robert Martin, Nydia Mendez, Manuel P. Monteiro, Larry Myatt, Linda Nathan, William Spring, David Whall and all the others who spoke so openly with us on the promise of anonymity. Without their observations this study could never have been undertaken; whatever value it proves to the city's schools is my only means of repayment. At the least, I hope they will not be too dismayed by my conclusions. Joseph McDonough, Edward Dooley, Peter Rowe, and Maryellen Donahue graciously supported the study, and responded to my many requests for data. Charlotte Harris, whose wry insights into the schools shaped the research plan, championed the project within the district.

Without the generous support of Pioneer's contributors, this study would have been impossible. The early interest of local and national foundations, and the steadfast encouragement of their executives, were as valuable as their financial contributions. A grant from State Street Bank helped to support the project; I am grateful to William Edgerly for his interest and advice.

I am especially indebted to the capable staff of the Pioneer Institute. Pioneer not only commissioned the study but also offered the ideal setting in which to complete it. I am grateful to Pioneer's chairman, Lovett C. Peters, whose clarity of vision I much admire, and to my co-director, Virginia Straus, who was unwavering in her enthusiasm for the project. Conna Craig, Pioneer's associate director, generously offered her assistance throughout the effort.

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I am grateful to my research assistants. In addition to researching the manuscript, Alison Franklin made sense of several thousand pages of interview transcripts while, miraculously, never losing the forest for the trees. Jennifer Friedman, who conducted many of the interviews, approached each with that rarest of qualities, an open mind. Ronan Wolfsdorf, Matt Dubois, and Sam Thernstrom assisted in the project's early stages. Susan Dana Lawrence greatly strengthened chapter 4 and Jim Peyser assisted with chapter 7.

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Most ideas, whether good or bad, result from applying the experiences of one domain to the needs of another--here, the culture of American entrepreneurship to the bureaucratic gridlock of the urban schools. David Tessel, Janice Leeming, Matthew Clark, Sally Randolph, and Julie Rochlin, all made an extraordinary investment, not least of time and effort, in my ventures, allowing me to experience the lessons of entrepreneurship.

But it is my teacher at Harvard University, Nathan Glazer, to whom I remain the most indebted. It was he who encouraged me to add my voice to the debate. His wisdom and fairmindedness remain my primary intellectual inspiration.

My skillful editor, James Taranto, tamed the unruly manuscript; Kim Zollinger compiled the many revisions; and Kathryn Ciffolillo, to my great fortune, prepared the manuscript for publication.

While no one can save me from errors that might have crept into these pages, I can free all involved (many of whom would probably have preferred to remain anonymous but were too polite to ask) from any responsibility for them. The book's conclusions are strictly my own.

Steven F. Wilson

PREFACE

ONE THING IS CERTAIN: the Boston public school system, like large urban districts everywhere, is in trouble. The average combined Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores of Boston public school students continue to decline. In 1988, Boston's average score was 764; in 1989, 759; in 1990, 750, and in 1991, 745—fully 151 points below the 1991 state and national average of 896.[1] Some 33 percent of Boston students do not graduate, one of the highest rates in the nation. In some schools the dropout rate is as high as 56 percent.[2] Of those who do finish high school, four in ten cannot read at the ninth grade level.[3]

Over the last fifteen years, whites and the middle class have largely abandoned the system. The result, in effect, is a system of educational apartheid, in which primarily low-income children of color are consigned to a second-rate education, one that offers grim prospects for their future.

Violence is a threat in many of the system's high schools, despite the schools' own force of seventy police officers. A student was stabbed to death in Boston High School in 1989; a headmaster was menaced in his office by a gun-wielding fifteen-year-old student in January 1992.[4] Youth gangs, male and female, infiltrate the schools; riots between rival gangs forced the temporary closing of one school in October 1990.[5]

Since 1980, the superintendency has changed hands seven times.[6] The elected school committee was thought to be so politicized and ineffectual that the state legislature recently voted to abolish it in favor of a seven-member committee appointed by the mayor. Some community leaders declared the new committee illegitimate, claiming it violates the Voting Rights Act. Backed by the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, they vowed to disrupt its meetings and prevent it from conducting business.[7]

As beleaguered as the Boston schools are today, they also face a rare opportunity. Within the system's 117 schools, there are outposts of hope—outstanding teachers, programs, and schools. There is growing consensus that serious reforms are needed to make all the schools work. Since assuming office, the new superintendent has shrewdly undertaken to build a broad coalition of support. The new school committee may live up to its promise and at last work to a common educational purpose. Both the committee and the superintendent are highly motivated and open to new thinking. In the State House as well, improving the schools has made its way to the top of the agenda. As of this writing, the governor and the legislature are fashioning a sweeping proposal for statewide educational reform.

It is a cruel irony that some of the finest universities in the world surround one of the nation's least distinguished school systems. What can be done not merely to arrest the atrophy of Boston's schools, but to restore this district—the birthplace of the common school—to its original stature as the leader in American public education? All parties are resolved to do something about the Boston schools, but what?

To better understand the state of the schools, this study combines an analysis of school department documents with a review of secondary materials, including recent studies on the Boston schools by Arthur D. Little, Massachusetts Advocacy Center, Citywide Educational Coalition, and Northeastern University; data from the state department of education; reports from other urban districts; and the writings of leading educators. Some fifty in-depth interviews were conducted with Boston administrators, principals, and teachers. The study aimed to be thorough, rather than scientific. The analysis is qualitative; the data are at times anecdotal, but still telling.

A consistent picture emerged from the interviews and research: an organization suffering from institutionalized gridlock. Its staff is infantilized by petty rules; the schools so encumbered by external mandates from local, state, and federal authorities (some 400 current court orders alone); and the system so pervaded by suspicion and distrust that productive change is virtually impossible.[8] Contrary to popular conception, the research reveals that the system is not starved for resources: spending of over $7,825 per student is generous.[9] In a comparison of 12 cities, Boston spent the most per student and had the highest ratio of teachers to students.[10] Boston's teachers, at an average salary of $43,367, are among the highest paid in the state and enjoy generous benefits.[11] Nor are staff members lazy or corrupt—the great majority of administrators and teachers interviewed were clearly committed to their work and determined to make a difference despite the odds.

The problem lies with the *public school culture.* That culture shapes the way the district's 7,878 staff members set about their jobs, determines how goals are set, and how employees organize to achieve them.[12] "Every organization has a culture, a persistent, patterned way of thinking about the central tasks of and human relationships within an organization. . . . Like human culture generally, it is passed from one generation [of employees] to the next."[13] Any attempt to summarize the culture of the Boston public schools runs the risk of seeming overstated—much better, then, to leave it to school system staff to describe in their own voices their organizational milieu.

One final note is necessary. This book is about policy, not politics. Thankfully, when it comes to education reform, the tired liberal-conservative passion play is nearing the end of its run. In the past, most "liberals" called for only incremental changes to the educational status quo, while "conservatives" proposed revolutionary changes. Discarding these shibboleths is a first step in clarifying the debate.

The first two chapters examine the major reforms on which the district administration has pinned its hopes: controlled choice and school-based management (SBM). Chapter 1 evaluates the promise of school choice programs in general, and the strengths and weaknesses of Boston's "controlled choice" program. Since race and the engineering of racial balance have been the system's consuming focus for nearly two decades, and since the controlled choice plan is a successor to court-ordered student assignments, the relationship of desegregation to the quality of education is newly examined. Chapter 2 takes up the district's second reform initiative, school-based management. Most educators favor shifting the locus of decision making closer to the classroom, but what can be expected from the specific model of school-based management, which districts everywhere are racing to implement? The chapter examines the actual results of programs in other cities, programs on which Boston's plan was modeled. It also offers an assessment of Boston's first year of SBM.

Chapter 3 reviews the research on effective urban schools and emphasizes the importance of a vital school culture in which parents, teachers, and students all subscribe to the school's mission, a "widely shared and warmly endorsed"[14] view of what constitutes the purpose and core tasks of the school. Chapter 4 examines the importance of strong leadership in creating effective urban schools. Just as successful entrepreneurs bring a single-minded passion to their businesses, the leaders of successful schools forcefully articulate a distinctive educational vision. If other staff members and parents embrace this vision, they form a community, the hallmark of all good schools. Several schools in Boston are exemplars; their programs and leaders—the heroes of this book—are profiled in this chapter.

Chapter 5 proposes a specific plan for encouraging such leadership. In lieu of the debilitating rules that now constrain school personnel and undermine educational quality, the chapter proposes to establish a "market" for education. Private sector entrepreneurship, a great American strength, provides the model for the chapter's proposal. The district would encourage educators and other professionals to launch innovative schools with diverse curricula and pedagogies. Parents would choose their children's schools; schools whose programs were not good enough to attract parents would be closed, and new schools with new management teams opened at the same sites. But parents are not the only ones with an interest in the schools; society has a stake in ensuring that students are taught basic skills and the responsibilities of citizenship. Chapter 6 urges that the district adopt a core curriculum that would be taught in all schools. Each school, however, would be free to choose its own teaching methods and to supplement the curriculum as it sees fit. The chapter also proposes a system to assess the performance of each school in teaching the core curriculum, so that parents can make informed choices between schools on academic grounds.

Can the city afford to launch the new entrepreneurial schools, or will it require an infusion of new resources? Chapter 7 reviews the Boston public schools' budget: how much money actually makes it to the classroom? and how much is consumed by administrative functions only peripherally related to education? The chapter presents a hypothetical budget that shows how money might be allocated differently if decisions were made by autonomous school leaders.

Chapters 8 and 9 review two mandated programs whose enrollment and costs are burgeoning, special education and bilingual education. Chapter 8 examines how Boston currently organizes to meet the special needs of children with physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities. The unbridled expansion of special education, the chapter shows, creates a vicious cycle hastening the disintegration of regular education. Chapter 9 reviews the state's transitional bilingual education law, and asks how well the needs of children with limited English proficiency are met in Boston's classrooms.

Education is a people-intensive occupation: A child's schooling is only as good as her teacher's. The book concludes with chapter 10, an analysis of how Boston today staffs its schools—from the recruitment of teachers, to their working environment, to the problem of ineffective staff members. How might a new public school culture attract the Commonwealth's best talent to the reinvention of the city's schools?

CHAPTER ONE

School Choice

IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, the Boston Public Schools have launched two major initiatives: the controlled choice student assignment plan and school-based management/shared decision making. What are these initiatives and will they help to improve the schools?

School reform has long been susceptible to fashion: educators have embraced, then discarded, such notions as open classrooms, minicourses, and back-to-basics. But the latest enthusiasm—school choice—has great promise for improving our schools, if properly implemented. Choice programs allow parents, with varying degrees of freedom, to select the schools their children attend. The notion enjoys remarkably broad support across the political spectrum, from Senator Kennedy to President Bush. Choice programs were adopted or revised in four states in 1989 and in seven states in 1990. In 1991, 10 states approved new choice legislation, 37 had such legislation pending, and 12 states had citizen coalitions working on choice initiatives.[1]

But choice means very different things to its diverse advocates. Supporters of *public school choice* regard it as a promising tool for improving public education, but oppose its extension to private and parochial schools. Others promote choice as a voluntary alternative to busing to achieve school desegregation. Advocates of *interdistrict choice* favor extending choice across district lines. Others call for *educational* *vouchers* that would allow parents to send their children to any school, public or private, at government expense.

The Arguments for Choice

Supporters of school choice typically offer three broad justifications: equal educational opportunity, individual liberty, and market competition.

The first argument for choice stresses the imperative of ensuring equal education for children of all races and socioeconomic groups. A city that operates segregated schools, whether or not intentionally, creates an inequitable allocation of educational opportunity. People of color living in impoverished neighborhoods often receive an education inferior to that offered to middle-class, primarily white students. Seeking to correct this inequity, some advocates insist that parental choice be limited in order that schools be racially balanced. By ensuring that each school mirrors the racial composition of the student population as a whole, they contend, "controlled choice" can desegregate the schools or maintain desegregation achieved earlier through involuntary busing. In short, school choice can level the playing field. A lottery for seats in the city's schools will grant equal educational opportunity to all children.

John E. Coons and others argue for choice as a vital expression of individual liberty. By conferring responsibility on parents to choose schools, we "respect the preferences of the poor just as we now respect those of the rich. Trust begets trust."[2] In empowering parents, especially disadvantaged and single parents, we uphold their roles as active citizens and advocates for their children. By contrast, the present system of assigned schools conveys to both children and parents that their values are irrelevant and subordinate to the demands of the system.

Finally, many advocates say choice will create a market for education. No longer assured of an enrollment, public schools will be forced to improve their educational product in order to compete for students. Parents, as customers, will be able to shop for the best school, an option now open only to those who can afford private schools.

While all three arguments for choice have merit, the last is the most compelling. It alone explains why schools can be expected to improve under choice. The first argument, for equal educational opportunity, proposes to remedy a social injustice. But providing equal access to the city's schools, both good and bad, does not *in the aggregate* improve educational opportunity. This is the lesson of Boston's painful experience with busing: As before, a few fortunate students attended good schools, and the majority remained in poor ones. Redressing funding inequities among the schools also fails to solve the problem, because more expensive schools are not necessarily better schools, as research has repeatedly shown.

Equity proponents fail to answer the question: equitable access to what? to the city's failing schools? The argument for equal educational opportunity is silent when it comes to school improvement. In fact, an over-emphasis on equity has often justified precisely those actions most inimical to the proper functioning of school choice. Many equity proponents believe it is unfair to reward and expand successful programs. They cannot resist the temptation to pour money into failing schools that neither attract nor educate students.

The second argument, for choice as an expression of individual liberty, is central to the philosophy of choice and the underlying principle of individual empowerment. The argument is especially pertinent to urban education, where today's failed policies have been based on the assumption that impoverished parents and children are helpless victims—an assumption that has often, tragically, proven self-fulfilling.

To many, a call to liberty is more palatable than theories that emphasize the forces of competition and accountability, which seem unforgiving. But in attempting to soften the forces of the market, we curtail competition and particularism, the very forces that promise real change in the schools. For if we have learned anything to date about choice programs, it is that smoothing the edges off competition—constraining choices and propping up failing schools—guarantees the failure of these programs.

Under a program of true choice, new schools could be launched with coherent missions, curricula, and pedagogies, and both staff and parents would gravitate to the schools that they believe are right for them. Effective programs would be strengthened and failing ones disbanded. In time, educational opportunities would be enhanced for all students.

Some Boston principals recognize how wrongheaded the current approach is. One local principal calls for true choice:

> Your budget should be based on the number of students you pull into your school. You don't pull enough students, you don't get as much money. . . . So now you're in the market. You're advertising. You have to show parents that you're a good school. I don't have a problem with that. I think it's a great idea. I think that if you can't put up then just close it down. Sounds drastic but it is true. With the unions and the way things go [now], people become complacent. I think you have to be challenged.[3]

Controlled Choice

From 1974 to 1989, Boston assigned students to schools in compliance with a desegregation plan mandated by a federal court order.[4] The court had found the city school system to be intentionally segregated, in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. As a remedy, the court devised a busing plan that divided Boston into tiny *geocodes*. Students from distant neighborhoods were drawn together to forcibly integrate schools. In 1987, the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit deemed the system *unitary:* the schools were determined to be "desegregated to the extent practicable."[5]

The Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) has since February 1989 urged Boston and other Massachusetts cities to adopt its "controlled choice" plan. The plan was developed by Charles Glenn, former director of the department's Office of Educational Equity, and two consultants, Charles Willie, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and Michael Alves, a former colleague of Willie's and a consultant to DOE. They have since adapted their controlled choice plan for other large urban school districts in the country. In Cambridge, Massachusetts, the program is widely considered a success. Other districts dropped the plan after purchasing it: Milwaukee shelved the plan after extensive hearings, and Little Rock discontinued the plan after its first year.[6]

In 1989, the Boston School Committee voted to adopt controlled choice. Now in its third year of operation, the plan divides the city into three geographic zones for elementary and middle schools; high schools serve students citywide. A brochure with a brief description of each school and an explanation of how the choice process works is mailed to all parents. In the spring, parents receive an application and are asked to choose schools in their zone. Parent information centers (PICs) in each zone offer information on the available schools and assist parents in making informed choices.

Each application is assigned a number by lottery; beginning with the first number in the lot, a computer program reviews each application and attempts to honor the parent's choice of school. Students are classified into the crude racial categories of white, black, or "other." Some choices are denied because the school is full and no seats remain for children of any race. But other choices are refused because quotas designate the number of classroom seats available to children in each of the three racial categories. If all the black seats are filled when a black student's application is reviewed—even if other seats remain open—the student will have to settle for a second- or third-choice school, or be assigned involuntarily to one that has room for black children.

Desegregation and Educational Improvement

The state and the architects of controlled choice promote it as a plan for bettering the schools. But Boston's school administrators have understood it quite differently. A review of internal school documents and interviews with school administrators revealed that the city's elaborate plan has little or nothing to do with school improvement. Internally it is known as the "student assignment plan" and is viewed strictly as a desegregation mechanism.[7] In fact, several administrators who report directly to the superintendent or deputy superintendent did not even recognize the term "choice plan" when interviewed.[8]

The officials responsible for implementing controlled choice have seemingly dismissed its role in school improvement. But could controlled choice nonetheless help Boston's schools? State DOE literature promoting choice emphasizes that schools will improve under the plan but does not say why. At least three arguments are offered at different times by DOE officials: competitive dynamic, referendum and intervention, and equal educational opportunity.

The competitive dynamic argument says that if Boston's schools truly were to compete for students in accordance with the theory of market competition, the staff of each school would strive to improve its educational offerings. Those that failed would face closure or staffing reductions. In fact, the controlled choice plan's architects originally proposed that failing schools would be identified by the number of parents choosing the school; schools that failed to attract applicants for three consecutive years would be closed. Regrettably, upon adopting the plan, the city was unwilling to allow "slack" in the system and required that five schools be closed immediately. Here both the plan's architects and the city confused buildings with schools. When a school fails to attract applicants, its management should change to give way to a new program, but the building should remain open. A choice plan does not require that a district maintain costly surplus capacity. The decision of where to eliminate excess physical space should not be driven by a school's performance. To permit this would be to penalize the residents of a community for the failure of a school's management.

In Boston there is no threat of schools closing based on performance. Schools are guaranteed enrollment in the annual student assignment process. Teachers do face the annual prospect of layoffs, but for reasons having nothing to do with merit—budget battles, the uncertainty of the city's annual appropriation, and the seniority or "bumping" system. Politics decide which schools are closed. Controlled choice, as it operates in Boston, provides no competitive incentive for schools to improve.

True choice could function as a parental referendum on the schools. The schools not chosen are those no one wants to attend. They should be the target of swift and comprehensive intervention. In practice, however, Boston's controlled choice system is quite different. Court Street, the district's headquarters, does operate a program that intervenes in failing schools, called STAR, for Schools That Are Restructuring. But the schools least chosen by parents are only occasionally targeted for intervention; more popular schools are no less likely to be designated STAR schools.

The imperative of equal access to educational opportunity for minority children is the primary theme of the controlled choice plan's authors. Equal educational opportunity has been the driving force in urban school reform in the Commonwealth since mandatory busing began in 1974. It is a well-intentioned goal, but the time has come to examine the effect of forced racial balance on educational quality. Has it in fact led to a better education for the city's children? Or has equal opportunity become little more than a platitude?

The Boston School Committee's past practice of segregating schools is indefensible. But the current remedies force children to pay for the committee's past sins. The ravages of busing and forced racial balance are now clear: the loss of the middle class to "white flight" and the de facto resegregation of schools by economic class. Theodore M. Black wrote, "Forced busing has not produced significant scholastic improvement among black youngsters, which was its purpose; it has proven tremendously costly in terms of children's time which could otherwise be devoted to study or recreation, in terms of precious dollars which could be spent on improving the quality of education for all kids, and in terms of the disruption and resentment which has set back the cause of interracial amity by years."[9]

In the landmark 1954 decision *Brown v. Board of Education,* and the 1955 *Brown II,* the U.S. Supreme Court urged that discrimination in public schools be ended "with all deliberate speed."[10] Richard Morgan has ably chronicled the path from *Brown*'s rejection of discrimination to the requirement of racial balance and quotas.[11] For more than ten years after *Brown,* the Court left it to lower courts to interpret the decision. Throughout this period, the courts required only that schools assign students without regard to race.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited racial discrimination by any program receiving federal financial support. The meaning of this proscription was particularly significant to Congress when, the following year, it debated legislation to provide substantial federal funding to local school districts (the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965). In the House, one congressman assured his colleagues that the bill provided no authorization to "work toward achieving racial balance in given schools." In the Senate, Hubert Humphrey invoked the recent decision of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, which held that desegregation meant only that children of different races "may not be prevented from intermingling or going to school together because of race or color" and not that there must be such "intermingling" in all school districts.[12]

But those responsible for the law's enforcement did not adhere to the intentions of Congress. The idealistic specialists in the Office of Education and the Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) sought to right an injustice and promote racial understanding; simply ending discrimination was insufficient. But driven by their own moral mission, Nathan Glazer has noted, they became increasingly removed from public opinion, even common sense.[13] In its original 1965 guidelines, the Office of Education of HEW included school choice plans as an acceptable desegregation method. But in its revised guidelines of 1967, HEW explained that "a school may (1) permit any student to transfer from a school where students of his race are a majority to any other school, within the system, where students of his race are a minority, or (2) assign students on such basis."[14] The latter clause, as Morgan has written, was the *coup de main* that launched involuntary busing. The HEW guidelines meant that

> racial assignment of students was not only licit, but might be required for a plan to be considered adequate. Thus was the use of racial percentages and quotas introduced into the law of "desegregation," and the requirement of a desegregation plan (actually racial balance plan) was set in place of the original statutory requirement.[15]

In its 1966 ruling in *United States v. Jefferson County Board of Education*, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals swept aside both Congress and *Brown*, making HEW's guidelines the "minimum standards" of desegregation law.[16] In 1971, the Supreme Court in *Swann v. Charlotte Mecklenberg Board of Education* reflected the change of course. While *Brown* had made it unconstitutional for schools to classify by race in student assignments, the Court now instructed districts to actively redistribute students by race in order to forcibly integrate the schools.[17] If racial quotas, recasting district lines, and the establishment of noncontiguous attendance zones were necessary, so be it. To "eliminate from the public schools all vestiges of state imposed segregation," each school system guilty of intentional past segregation would now be obliged to become "unitary." In a unitary system, schools would reflect the racial composition of the district's student population at large. But racial balance was not required in every school in strict arithmetic terms, and schools of principally one race did not necessarily evidence a lack of racial balance if it was not the consequence of past discrimination.[18]

The latter stipulations were not reflected in the rulings of Judge Arthur Garrity, who issued some 400 over more than a decade telling the Boston public schools how to manage their affairs, despite the evident failure of his policies to improve the educational opportunities of the city's children. From the assignment of children to the schools, to the composition of staff at each site, to the distribution of resources for extracurricular education, Garrity clung to a rigid definition of "racial balance." Yet the pursuit of "racial balance," like a dog chasing its tail, rendered the notion of racial balance absurd. Originally, when whites constituted 61 percent of the student population and blacks 32 percent, Garrity determined that any school that deviated from this ratio by more than 10 percentage points was segregated. By this definition, a school that was 50 percent black and 50 percent white would be considered segregated.[19]

In racially segregating students and providing schools in white neighborhoods with greater resources than schools in minority neighborhoods, the Boston School Committee had long followed a unjust and discriminatory policy of engineered racial *im*balance. In this context, it is clear why, for many policymakers, desegregation became synonymous with the policy of racial *balance*. In 1965, the Massachusetts State Board of Education released its eloquent report:

> The Negro child and his family have too often heard the message, "Keep out, stay back, you are not wanted." He and his family have too often been made to feel different and inferior. The racially imbalanced school reinforces that feeling. Inside the school, the young faces are almost all black. The older faces--those of the teachers, the ones in charge--are mostly white. Does the child wonder why only black children go to this school? A child cannot comprehend the subtle difference between illegal segregation in the South and racial imbalance in the North. He sees only that he is Negro and almost all of his schoolmates are Negroes.
>
> Our conclusions are clear. Racial imbalance represents a serious conflict with the American creed of equal opportunity. It is detrimental to sound education

> in the following ways: It does serious educational damage to Negro children by impairing their confidence, distorting their self-image, and lowering their motivation. It does moral damage by encouraging prejudice within children regardless of their color. . . . It squanders valuable human resources by impairing the opportunities of many Negro children to prepare for the professional and vocational requirements of our technological society. It is imperative that we begin to end this harmful system of separation. The means are at hand. Each day of delay is a day of damage to the children of the Commonwealth. . . .[20]

The state's 1965 Racial Imbalance Act stated that any school with more than 50 percent nonwhite enrollment was racially imbalanced and incapable of providing equal educational opportunity. Such a school was presumed inferior. The law reflected the prevailing sociological conceptions of its time. As Diane Ravitch has written,

> Most sociologists in the early 1960s seemed to agree that blacks were trapped in an inferior caste status; that they could escape only by becoming integrated into a predominantly white setting; that black culture was in various ways deficient for historical reasons; and that a predominantly black school could never be a good school because it was predominantly black. These ideas gave a cogency and moral force to the remedy of racial balancing. In accord with these assumptions, integration leaders often said that "real" integration could take place only with a white majority.[21]

In Detroit, a federal district judge turned down a plan that, like Judge Garrity's prescriptions for Boston, would have required each school to reflect the district's population within a narrow range. The plan, according to the judge, would be "rigid and inflexible . . . treating [pupils] as pigmented pawns to be shuffled about and counted solely to achieve an abstraction called 'racial mix.'"[22] But in Boston, just such a plan was sustained well after popular support for it, even in the black community, had waned.

Many years after these policies were mandated, few large urban school systems have a majority of white students. In Boston, only 21.6 percent of the district's enrollment is white, making racial balance a demographic impossibility. How ironic then, that in 1987 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit declared the system "unitary."

School Choice

For eighteen years, the DOE and the Boston School Committee have followed a policy of assigning children to the city's schools according to racial and ethnic quotas. The heavy-handed program of involuntary busing ended in 1989. But the same policy continues today, in the guise of controlled choice. Indeed in Boston, the courts, not the district, run the school choice program. Responsibility for it rests with the district's Department of Implementation. Although a unit of the district office, it is a creation of the court. Its director, Catherine Ellison, is on the BPS payroll but is appointed by the court and cannot be fired by the superintendent. Ellison disavows any responsibility for school improvement. Asked about the effect of the controlled choice plan on educational quality, Ellison said she was very "reluctant . . . to speak to the educational issue" because she has been told, "'You are doing assignments—you are not in the field of education.'"[23]

Were Ellison and her staff concerned with educational improvement, they would emphasize the requirements of any successful choice plan—that parents receive accurate information about their options, that differences between schools are highlighted, and that parents' choices are made without coercion. But these are not the department's priorities. For Ellison and her staff, controlled choice is a numbers game.

The goal is to fulfill racial quotas while minimizing the *perception* of parental coercion. Thus, school officials are encouraged to undermine free choice in order to serve these goals. These practices are often directly at odds with the goal of school improvement. For example, the state Office of Educational Equity urges zone superintendents to instruct PIC staff to "counsel parents and students about the options available in each school, encouraging desegregative assignment requests."[24] When the worst schools fail to attract applicants, PICs are instructed to steer choices toward them. A memo from Charles Glenn, then director of the Office of Educational Equity, to then Commissioner of Education Harold Raynolds notes that few whites attend Madison Park High School, a vocational school. Glenn concludes that "the zone parent information center needs to develop a strategy for presenting the benefits of vocational education to white students and their parents."[25] One report faulted the district for leaving children unassigned to a school: "Their parents had not been counseled into including schools with available space among their selections."[26] Another DOE report chastises the parent information staff for their "failure or inability . . . to counsel parents away from [choices] . . . they should have known could not be honored."[27]

The result is the appearance of few "involuntary assignments" and the impression that most parental "choices" are fulfilled. Because the PIC encourages parents to list safety schools that are likely to have places for their racial group, and because parents whose first-round requests are denied must participate in a second round of "choices," the department's much-promoted statistics on the small number of involuntary assignments are meaningless.[28] After all, as Abigail Thernstrom has asked, is a "suggested" choice really voluntary? Is a fifth choice really a choice?[29] More disturbing still, even first-choice, first-round data are suspect, because these choices may have been manipulated by counselors on the Court Street payroll. Even if the Department of Implementation were willing to collect and publish this information, these data could not be trusted to highlight failing schools that no one would choose to attend. Indeed the very expensive choice process tells us little about the relative attractiveness of Boston's 117 schools to the city's parents.

Managers responsible for implementation dismiss the idea that parents' choices are a referendum on school quality, and are quick to defend unpopular schools. Roger Cunningham, the director of the Student Service Unit in the Department of Implementation, said,

> If you are going to use criteria in defining the bad school as the number of people that apply and the number of administrative [involuntary] assignments that have to be made to that school and say . . . because they have such a substantial number of administrative assignments it's a bad school, that's unfair to the school.[30]

In addition, schools that consistently fail to attract students do not face a greater likelihood of reorganization under the district's STAR program. In fact, based on 1990 data, there is no correlation between STAR designation and either the occupancy level or the rate of involuntary assignments. As table 1-1 shows, four STAR schools had high enrollments and few involuntary assignments. Ten schools had 30 to 50 percent of their students forcibly assigned, yet were not designated STAR schools.

TABLE 1-1
SELECTION OF STAR SCHOOLS

School	% Occupancy	% Involuntary Assignments	Restructuring: STAR
Burke High	86	48	No
East Boston High	73	45	No
Ellis Elementary	69	54	No
Sumner Elementary	73	46	No
Farragut Elementary	91	8	Yes
Wheatley Middle	71	11	Yes
Mozart Elementary	87	7	Yes
Higginson Elementary	76	7	Yes

Source: "Assignments by Zone," Department of Implementation, Boston Public Schools, 1990.

Schools are designated STAR schools at Court Street's discretion, the decision driven as much by district politics as by loss of parental support. According to one administrator, the state was not willing to work with schools that "did not show willingness to change."[31] Maureen Gelloe, who coordinates the program, explained that the STAR schools were chosen because "they did not receive a sufficient number of students from racial and ethnic groups. Sometimes they are schools that aren't different from other Boston public schools. . . . In fact, they are some of the best schools in Boston. They just have recruiting difficulties."[32]

The STAR approach itself is wrongheaded. "Push up the bottom," Willie demands.[33] Controlled choice, he argues, improves public schools because when parents shun a particular school, administrators are alerted, and money and attention can be directed to the school to improve it.[34] But why should *failing* schools and staff be rewarded with additional resources? Under STAR, Court Street staff time and resources are directed to inferior schools, the reverse of true market competition in which successful schools are rewarded and replicated, and failing programs disbanded.

Some controlled choice proponents concede that the choice plan is a tool for attaining racial quotas with the least appearance of coercion. Forced integration, they argue, remains the best hope for improving educational opportunities for disadvantaged students. But has the policy, in place for almost two decades, achieved its goals?

As table 1-2 shows, the policy of mandated racial balance has resulted in "integration" only by the most narrow definition. The primary effect of the policy, beginning with busing and continuing with controlled choice, has been to create a system of socioeconomic segregation. The middle class (whites and people of color) has abandoned the public schools for suburban, parochial, and private schools. The city's schools have become a separate and unequal system serving primarily disadvantaged children.

TABLE 1-2
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

	1970 Headcount	%	1980 Headcount	%	1990 Headcount	%
White	62,014	64.1	24,060	35.4	13,458	22.2
Black	28,822	29.8	31,080	45.7	28,777	47.5
Hispanic	4,106	4.2	9,189	13.5	12,691	21.0
Other (Asian and Native American)	1,754	1.8	3,624	5.3	5,617	9.3
Total	96,696	100.0	67,953	100.0	60,543	100.0

Source: October Report, Department of Implementation, Boston Public Schools.

In 1973, the year before desegregation began, whites constituted 57 percent of Boston public school students. In 1983, after almost ten years of forced desegregation, the white student population had declined to 28 percent. The corollary to this reduction of the white population is a *decrease* in interracial exposure. Before the court order, the interracial exposure level—that is, the proportion of white students in the average minority child's school—was 24 percent. That level peaked at 40 one year after the order; nine years later it had fallen to 23 percent.[35] This reduction in the white population reflects, in part, a reaction against forced busing and a response to the declining quality of the city's schools. In fact, many families now move out of the city when their children reach school age.

During the first ten years of mandatory assignments, enrollment in the system declined from about 85,000 students to 60,000 students. The racial and ethnic composition of this enrollment changed dramatically over the same period, mirroring changes in the city's population of school-age children.

TABLE 1-3
BOSTON SCHOOL-AGE POPULATION
(Ages 5–17)

		1970		1980		1990	
		Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
White	Hispanic	97,413	73.9	2444	2.7	3,774	5.2
	Non-Hispanic			45,373	49.6	25,818	35.3
Black	Hispanic	31,924	24.2	1,130	1.2	2,431	3.3
	Non-Hispanic			31,859	34.8	28,058	38.3
Other	Hispanic	2,541	1.9	6,411	7.0	7,135	9.7
	Non-Hispanic			4,346	4.7	6,016	8.2
Total		131,878	100.0	91,565	100.0	73,232	100.0

Source: United States Bureau of the Census. The census bureau treats Hispanic as a category distinct from the racial categories black, white, and other.

The effect of mandatory busing has been to create not integrated but racially *isolated* schools. As David Armor has written, it was first assumed by experts and the courts that racial prejudice alone explained resistance to busing, since whites generally opposed the program while blacks supported it. But extensive research has shown that both white and black parents objected to many aspects of the plan, including having their children sent to unfamiliar schools or unsafe neighborhoods, the difficulty in reaching a distant school in an emergency, the loss of time for homework and extracurricular activities, and the loss of community caused by exclusion from neighborhood schools. In fact, surveys revealed that blacks supported the plan for the same reason many whites opposed it: blacks perceived a better education awaiting their children at the end of the bus trip, and whites feared a worse one.[36]

It might be assumed that these attitudes were a cover for racial intolerance. Plainly, bigotry played some role. But in the last ten years, white parents have kept their children in neighborhood schools when minority students were bused in to constitute up to half of the school's population. Similarly, forced busing led to little white flight when white children ended up in predominantly minority middle-class schools with high academic standards.[37]

Middle-class and white flight from the Boston schools is correctly attributed to the desire of parents to control the education of their children. Those who can afford to move to a community with good schools, or pay the tuition for private schools, will do so. Even today some of the most outspoken advocates of desegregation enroll their children in private schools or discretely arrange tuition at public schools outside the city, in Cambridge or Brookline.

For the last eighteen years, racial balance and quotas have monopolized the attention of Court Street administrators. Forced racial balance is a failed educational policy. One Boston principal said,

> You can't do it. I remember when we first started deseg and a black lady came to look at the school and said, "You have a beautiful school here. But if my child ever learns to hate a white person, it's going to be from coming to your school on a bus because we don't want to do it." She had a child in the first grade, and she wanted the kid to go to a school that she could see. . . . This school's not "racially balanced." There's not a single one that's racially balanced. . . . And so it became really artificial and has remained so. And then busing became . . . the tail wagging the dog.
>
> I don't think you can legislate goodness, if you see goodness as total racial balance. I don't. I think the debacle of race is pretty much over in the schools.[38]

Should racial quotas dictate that seats in a good school go unfilled, or that students be assigned to the school against their wishes, because the applicants who *want* to attend this program are not of the right color? How are children served by such a policy? One award-winning teacher saw the effect on her high school:

> The enrollment has to reflect the district. If only 23 percent of the kids in the system are white, then each school can only have 23 percent white kids. So it's gone to the extreme, where out of every ten kids from a neighborhood, only two and a half kids can go to that school. I think that when you do that you're telling people, "Well, we don't want you here anyway." We're in Jamaica Plain; there are a lot of Hispanics here, and there's a multicultural program within the school. A lot of the Hispanic kids are drawn to the school because there are activities and acknowledgment of where kids come from. Our academic standards are the same. But we have to say, "We can't take any more Hispanic kids for this program." I think it works against kids, no matter what background they're from. I don't think there's much choice, despite what they say.[39]

As Court Street officials concentrate on racial quotas, very little time remains to improve the schools. The district manages the plan to ensure that all schools are "chosen" and that the quotas are met with the fewest involuntary assignments. DOE then congratulates itself for steering parents toward unpopular schools: "More schools are becoming popular as a result of school improvement and outreach efforts. . . . A healthy side-effect of this broadening of appeal is that a few 'superstar' schools no longer dominate the applications."[40]

In practice, then, Boston's controlled choice plan accomplishes two goals, neither of which relates to quality education. First, the failing schools and their staffs are protected. Because the choice data are distorted by the manipulation of parents' choices, the pressure that should be directed to failing schools is diffused. Second, "racial balance" is enforced in the name of equal opportunity. But in what sense is a system integrated when the middle class has exercised the power of the pocketbook and abandoned the city's public schools? With their flight, the schools have lost strong students, a powerful and active parent constituency, and, inevitably, a large measure of political and financial support.

Now that the district has been declared unitary with respect to student assignments, racial quotas are no longer required by law. As Thernstrom has noted, the school committee is free to design any assignment policy that makes educational sense. Plaintiffs seeking to reopen the matter would have to demonstrate that a choice plan free of controls was *intended* to racially segregate students.[41]

Ironically, a genuine choice plan would be the best way to foster integration. Parents of all racial and ethnic backgrounds want basically the same thing for their children: a quality education in a safe school. Other cities' experiences have borne this out. In the absence of explicit racial quotas, Detroit's choice schools (both magnet and alternative) are both the most integrated and the highest scoring in the city.[42] In Savannah, Georgia, after a magnet school plan replaced a mandatory busing plan, nearly a thousand white students came back to the public schools from private schools.[43] The East Harlem program of distinctive schools and unrestricted choice attracted 1,500 students from outlying districts.[44] When they are reasonably certain of being allowed to select a good school, middle-class parents return to the city's schools, strengthening support for programs, enhancing diversity, and increasing parental involvement. As David Armor has written, "The success of magnet and choice programs has revealed a basic principle: effective school integration is attained not by racial balance formulas, but by educational incentives that also promote integration."[45] According to the principal of a school that has attracted a balanced enrollment,

> The zone that we are in includes East Boston, Charlestown, Brighton and Allston, the North End, the West End—areas of the city that are white, that traditionally do not think of sending their children into Roxbury for schooling. . . . But we've been able to attract white children through programs that we have. We just had to find out why we were losing children and to build new enrollment to the school.[46]

The policy of forced racial balance suffers from dwindling support, even among the constituencies it was intended to benefit. At the time of the original court order, about half of the city's black parents supported the desegregation plan. But by 1982, only 14 percent of African-American parents in a Boston survey supported court-ordered school assignments. The responses of the 626 black parents surveyed showed little variance by the parents' income, educational level, or political affiliation. Only 14 percent of the respondents thought Garrity's plan had improved the quality of schooling available to their children.[47]

Several leading black academicians question the policy of forced racial balance. Economist Thomas Sowell contends that excellence has nothing to do with ethnicity and that black schools are not inherently unequal. Harvard Law School professor Derrick Bell argues that civil rights activists have ignored demographic changes that have taken place in the cities since the mid-fifties; as they press single-mindedly for the ever-more-elusive goal of racial balance, the cities have become increasingly black and the educational needs of black students have been overlooked.[48] Franklyn Jenifer, president of Howard University and former chancellor of the Massachusetts Board of Regents, regards racial headcounting to be a bankrupt social policy:

> The most important consideration for urban youngsters is not integration but quality education. Although integration has been a goal for a number of people for a number of years, the reality is that this goal restricts the ability in some urban areas for schools to create quality education. It's very difficult, for instance, to have a quality black school if there's a mandate for whites. Recognizing this reality, it's important to have a strong program of true choice—first to allow choice among public schools without restrictions on ethnic balance, and second to phase in certain parochial schools, providing they would adhere to certain restrictions the government would impose.[49]

Some local black leaders share Jenifer's priorities and are exasperated with the system's emphasis on quotas over education. Charles Desmond, a vice chancellor at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, said the system is "antiquated, outdated and needs to be reformed."[50] Minister Don Muhammad of the Nation of Islam went further, stating, "I don't think education is on the back burner; it's not even near the stove."[51] None of the black leaders interviewed link educational improvement with further desegregative remedies. Ronald Homer, president of the Boston Bank of Commerce, does not think that quotas "add one bit to promoting excellence."[52] Professor Alvin Poussaint, at Harvard Medical School, noted that "desegregation alone can't make a lousy system a good school system."[53]

Instead, black leaders emphasize staff leadership and high expectations for student achievement. Muhammad commends the few "sincere principals in the system . . . who in spite of the bureaucracy and the politics decided to make [a difference] in their schools."[54] Desmond urges teachers to aim for "a higher standard of excellence."[55] The scarcity of determined principals and teachers and the DOE's focus on desegregation make Homer question whether "the will or the commitment is there to turn out a quality product."[56]

Barbara Garlington is a teacher at the Early Learning Center and the recipient of a Golden Apple award for teaching. Her interest in the cultivation of self-esteem in African-American students has grown steadily over her 29 years in the system. Today she speaks derisively about "a black child being bused into a black school in a black neighborhood." She proposes that Court Street "throw out those buses, upgrade these schools, and give parents a choice."[57] Steven Leonard, principal of the King Middle School, suggested, "If we take the focus off race completely and put it on the quality of education, that will solve the choice problems and a lot of the problems that are killing us now. And once we do that, there will be an increased white student population. . . ." He described the current policy of ensuring that white students are carefully distributed throughout the system as "an excuse for not dealing with the quality of education."[58]

Plainly, students benefit from mixing with classmates of other races, and a diverse classroom fosters racial tolerance. But socialization must not be confused with education: Integration is no assurance of academic opportunity. Blacks do not need to sit next to whites to learn, or vice versa. No one will learn in a poor school, regardless of its racial composition. As Ravitch has written, "The role of government must be to provide blacks with the opportunity and the means to make choices for themselves, because it was precisely this power to make decisions that was denied to blacks in the past."[59] Advocates of choice want parental freedom to select the right school for their children and believe that choice and quality are linked.

As Nathan Glazer has noted, regardless of what the Supreme Court meant by desegregation when it prohibited segregated schools in 1954, or what Congress meant when it defined desegregation in the Civil

Rights Act of 1964, desegregation has come to mean busing. In Boston today, it still means involuntary assignments and busing. "The supporter of busing," Glazer wrote, "is thus said to support desegregation, the opponent of busing is attacked as defending segregation, even though that term originally meant state-ordered or city-ordered segregation of the races."[60] But when nearly all parties now concede that busing has been no substitute for improving the schools, such accusations are disingenuous. No one intent on bettering the schools need fear them.

In Milwaukee, officials rejected controlled choice after three months of hearings. A task force recommended that the school system concentrate on transforming every school into a specialty school rather than devote resources to a complex new student assignment plan. Milwaukee recognized that the true challenge is to allow schools to differentiate and improve, an idea the designers of controlled choice, with their misplaced emphasis on "fairness," neglect. According to Robert Peterkin, Milwaukee's former superintendent, "The issue was resoundingly taking effort away from student improvement. We were spending all of our time on student assignment." Controlled choice architect Charles Willie responded to the task force's recommendation: "We are disappointed that they seem to have put the equity agenda on hold. Any plan that is unfair is eventually harmful." As if consigning all students to mediocre schools were "fair."[61]

Controlled Choice and Implementation Problems

In addition to having some flaws in its design, the Boston program was handicapped in its first two years by implementation problems. A DOE report, titled "Recommended Modifications to Assignment Process," concluded that the 1990 process was little improved over the previous year's, which the department had earlier criticized.[62]

Like many BPS programs, responsibility for the program rests with both Court Street and the zone offices; the result is that no one is held accountable. The parent information function, vital to the success of choice plans, is controlled choice's weakest link. At a Boston School Committee hearing, parents described their experiences of calling parent information centers at the zone offices and Court Street and receiving contradictory responses to their questions on the choice process.[63]

Despite generous funding, the PICs are poorly regarded by administrators and seldom consulted by parents. A Citywide Educational Coalition (CWEC) survey of first and sixth grade parents found that only one-quarter visited a PIC in the 1989–90 school year. Only 6 percent of parents named the PIC as the most helpful source of information in choosing a school, and 38 percent said they knew nothing about the PICs. Parents found that the most helpful source was CWEC's brief "fact sheet" on the schools.[64] In the school department's own survey of parents of high school students, the parent information centers were the *least* cited source of information on the schools, except for the media (table 1-4).

TABLE 1-4
PARENT INFORMATION SOURCES

Question: Which of the following sources influenced your choice of school? (152 respondents)

Source of Information	Number of Mentions	% of Respondents
Friends and Neighbors	74	49
BPS Booklet	61	40
Children	57	37
Recruitment Efforts	55	36
Open Houses	20	13
Parent Information Centers	12	8
Media	7	5

Source: High School Zone Assignment Survey, Boston Public Schools, 11 June 1990.

It is disturbing that so many parents rely on the school department's information booklet. The guide is confusing, and one platitudinous paragraph-long description is indistinguishable from the next. Similar parent information pamphlets translated into other languages are rife with spelling and grammatical errors.[65]

How could the district do better? Many consider the Cambridge parent information function to be exemplary. Because Cambridge students remain in the same school from kindergarten through the eighth grade and the district has only one high school, most parents make only one decision over the course of their child's schooling. The Cambridge PIC's budget is $151,992, for a per-decision cost of just under $200, not accounting for transfer students. Boston spends approximately $861,000 in state grant money to operate PICs at each of the zone offices, and parents make decisions at least three times: for elementary, middle, and high school. With approximately 8,000 decisions to support across these levels, based on current enrollment, the PIC's cost per decision is about $108, or half that of Cambridge. Parents new to the schools making their first decision (for kindergarten or first grade) will require more support than when choosing again at grades 6 and 9. If Boston is intent on reaching every parent, as Cambridge does, it should budget approximately $1.75 million for parent outreach ($200 per student for each initial choice, and $100 for each of the subsequent two choices).

Very few administrators, let alone parents, understand the complex procedure by which Ellison and the Department of Implementation assign students. The department has not attempted to inform parents in detail about how this procedure works. But each of the many algorithms that the department might devise to "compose enrollments for each school based on racial ethnic percentages"[66] would have vastly different results for tens of thousands of students and their families. The department's choice of one such algorithm reflects specific priorities and tradeoffs.

If the district's priorities were publicized, would Boston parents support them? One parent, Dr. Douglas Johnson, who served on the Student Assignment Task Force under Superintendent Wilson, has examined the process closely and issued several recommendations.[67] First, he says, parents need to understand how their children will be assigned so they will know how to rank schools. The Department of Implementation should document its assignment methods for public review.

Many Boston parents would be surprised to learn that racial quotas determining assignments are based on the total number of students of each race in a given zone, rather than the number in each *grade* in that zone. This means, for example, that the proportion of kindergarten seats allotted to whites is based on the proportion of the zone's entire student population that is white, rather than on the proportion of white kindergartners. In 1989, according to Johnson, 47 percent of students entering kindergarten were white, but only 21 percent of the seats were allotted to whites.[68] Similarly, 49 percent of sixth graders were black, but only 43 percent of seats were allotted to blacks. This means that substantial numbers of white kindergartners and black sixth graders were given a temporary or late assignment, while black kindergartners and white sixth graders stood a good chance of being placed in their chosen schools. In 1991, white students in the East and West zones were six times as likely as nonwhites to receive temporary assignments to kindergarten—meaning that they were not assured of being able to attend the same school for first grade.

Quotas are based on the court's long-standing categorization of students as "white," "black," and "other." But in the later steps of the complex process used to assign students, students are treated as members of only two groups, "whites" and "nonwhites." The algorithm ensures that each school adheres exactly to the quota of white students—that is, in each school not more than 1 in 5 students is white. Is the basis of the Department of Implementation's sine qua non to ensure that the school's diminishing white enrollment is distributed evenly through the schools? In any event, consider the uncomfortable effects. In the lower grades, many more than 1 in 5 applicants are white. As a result of the quotas, many students remain unassigned until late in the summer or even after school begins. Eventually, the school district adds more seats and some children are assigned to schools. In 1991, fully 40 percent of the white applicants to the first grade in the East and West Zones were not assigned in the first round (versus 2 percent of nonwhites); only by the end of July were they notified of their school. By then, the time to make arrangements to attend other public, private, and parochial schools outside the Boston system is long past. There are two effects of this process. First, white students are much less likely to get their choices than nonwhites. Second, many parents of all races are pressured to make other arrangements for their children. The effect of these policies is to encourage white flight and to worsen the resegregation of Boston's schools.

Not only whites are disadvantaged by this process. Consider the effects of racial quotas on the city's coveted Advanced Work Classes, where students are taught a substantive curriculum by some of the district's best teachers. Though many Hispanics are qualified for these classes, very few are permitted to enroll because they must compete against high-performing Asian students for a limited number of "other" seats.[69]

Boston places an abnormally large number of students in separate special and bilingual education classes. While the official policy is to "mainstream" such children into regular education as quickly as possible, racial quotas frustrate this goal. Many parents choose to keep their children in special or bilingual education rather than enroll them in regular education and be obliged to transfer them to a different school as required by quotas.[70]

Some of these problems might be reduced if a more precise set of racial and ethnic classifications was adopted. But how precise? "White," "African-American," "Hispanic," and "Asian"? What about Native Americans? How would Haitians be categorized? And Cape Verdeans? It seems clear that such questions are counterproductive: the district should abandon its preoccupation with racial and ethnic categories and adopt a choice plan whose purpose is to improve the schools. For such a plan to succeed, several issues must be addressed, including parent information.

Choice and Parent Information

Critics argue that choice programs will benefit only the educated and affluent, who routinely research their options, state their preferences, and make reasoned decisions. Nicholas Lemann is not alone when he argues,

> If the greatest handicap suffered by low-achieving students is their parents' impoverishment, poor education, lax discipline, and scant interest in education . . . is it really so ridiculous to worry that these same parents might fail to become tough, savvy, demanding education consumers the instant they obtain the right to decide which school gets their children's tuition money?[71]

But Lemann's is a straw-man argument. It is not necessary that all parents have perfect information in order for choice to function and better the schools. Furthermore, it is paternalistic to suggest that low-income parents would make uninformed choices. A choice plan offering a wide range of school programs would lead social workers, church groups, and community leaders to review the schools and counsel parents. Moreover, as William Spring has argued, it is reasonable to assume that nearly all parents in Boston can name the schools they regard as the best and the worst. Parents need not rank all the schools in between.[72] The choice process need only match parents to schools and, by the sum of their choices, highlight both the schools parents want and those in which they have lost all confidence. No market relies on perfect consumer information. Education is no exception. Even parents who make uninformed choices would fare better under a true choice plan than they do today.

Many principals made it clear that parents already know which schools are effective. According to one,

> You can make up all the excuses you want but if you're not doing the job, clearly nobody will pick the school. Case in point: a school in the heart of Roxbury—nobody would go near this place. But there were waiting lists of a hundred and some odd kids for every grade. That's unbelievable. And the reason is parents know it's a top middle school; it's a safe middle school, and they've got a good record for reading, writing, and math. Word of mouth. Everybody wants to get in there.[73]

Another principal shatters the notion that low-income urban parents will not make sound choices:

> Parents are coming to school, looking at and scrutinizing everything. They are asking critical questions: What's your curriculum like? If my child is gifted, what's in it for him or her? What can I expect to see? What are your reading scores? I had one group of parents who came in and wanted to see the reading scores, because they had looked them up from the year before. They wanted to see the basic skills test, which had just been released. They want to meet the teachers. They want their children to come and spend a day in the classroom. Parents watch the interaction of the children and the teachers. They're taking this very seriously, they really are. Now whether the school system is

> accommodating their choice, that I don't know. I think that's a drawback here. We have, unfortunately, a very weak Department of Implementation that's not fully behind the school choice plan, and parents tell me that they make it difficult.[74]

While informal channels will ensure that most parents are acquainted with their options, it is essential that all parents have access to accurate information about the schools, especially as these options become more differentiated. Illiterate parents and those with limited English proficiency will always require special outreach.

Critics argue that choice will not hold schools accountable for educational results, because schools will be chosen for convenience and safety as much as, or more than, for educational merit. Noneducational factors undeniably figure in parents' choices, as they should. Critics point to interdistrict plans like that of Jefferson County, Colorado, where parents often send their children to the most convenient school.[75] A study of parents registering their children for kindergarten in Fall River, Massachusetts, found that proximity to home was the main reason for selecting first-choice schools, ahead of "school atmosphere," "school programs," and the availability of extended day care programs.[76] But the survey polled only parents of kindergartners, for whom differences in school programs would likely have been a secondary consideration. Moreover, even parents who base their decisions on concerns other than school programs would benefit from a choice system. As one teacher put it,

> If the Boston schools and the suburban schools were all working and the differences were that this school offers this program, this school offers that program, this school is closer to my neighborhood, that one is closer to my mother's neighborhood so she can pick up the kids. . . . Being able to make a decision on program, on logistics, on location would be wonderful.[77]

Even under the existing controlled choice program, Boston parents select schools based on factors other than location. In Boston's West Zone, for example, the Timilty School drew 15 percent of parents' first choices in 1990, while three other middle schools—Wheatley, Dearborn, and Lewis—each received less than 2 percent of parents' choices.[78] Yet all four schools are in the same neighborhood. It is likely that such differences between schools would be heightened if school officials did not try to manipulate parents into selecting unpopular schools, and if schools were in fact more varied. Once schools adopt distinct approaches and specialties, parents will learn of these as well. Even parents who make uninformed choices, despite outreach efforts from the school system and independent agencies, will benefit from the gradual betterment of the schools and the choices of their more informed peers.

Choice and Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is a central theme in current writings on education. But the discussion often conflates three distinct aspects of the parents' relationship to their child's schooling: the degrees to which parents are informed about school choices, care about their child's education, and actively participate in their child's school.

The second aspect of parental involvement, educational commitment, is often confused with the third, participation in the schools. Research has shown, not surprisingly, that parental interest in schooling contributes significantly to student achievement, high grades and test scores, improved attitudes, and long-term academic gains.[79] But how can educators encourage parents to care about education? Suburban parents tend to be well educated, yet even teachers in the suburbs complain that parents are disengaged and unmotivated.[80] How can urban parents, many of whom disliked or dropped out of school themselves, be inspired to support the schools, monitor homework, and value education?

The answer is among the most elusive in urban education. Boston University recognizes the problem's primacy in its ambitious plan for remaking the Chelsea schools. Its original white paper concluded that the intervention required that parents and the community be taught to value education. Parents, the plan asserts,

> need to be taught how they, as [the] first teachers of their children, can and must work with their children. . . . must be provided with personal career development skills including communication and group interaction skills, and work and personal values clarification.[81]

Only a costly program of indoctrination will create the parents Boston University wants. Today, there remains no practical plan to get Chelsea parents on board.

Peter Berger and Richard Neuhaus contend that "most modern societies have in large part disfranchised the family in the key area of education" and add that the burden of this condition "falls most heavily on lower-income parents who have little say in what happens to their children in school." This condition "violates a fundamental human right, perhaps the most fundamental human right—the right to make a world for one's children."[82]

While there is not yet empirical proof, it seems likely that choice will foster parental commitment to education. If even the most apathetic parents are reached by independent counselors, given the opportunity to contemplate various educational programs, and empowered to make commensurate choices for schools, they will understand that society respects their preferences. As John Coons has noted, to ask parents to select a school is to treat them as responsible for the welfare of their children. If society confers such responsibility, parents will likely take it on. Human nature, after all, is such that we care more about those things we have chosen than those to which we have been assigned.[83]

In the past, strong neighborhoods fostered involvement in the community school. Families knew and looked out for one another. But with current heterogeneous urban lifestyles, we may well not know our neighbors. Choice, correctly implemented, can restore a sense of community by bringing together parents and teachers who share similar educational values. Like any institution, a school "with character" (in the language of a recent RAND Corporation report) develops its own small rituals and lore and draws parents in to celebrate the school's values and traditions.[84] The antithesis of today's faceless urban schools, these new communities foster a sense of belonging and ownership. As chapter 3 suggests, true schools of choice can be strong weapons against the anomie of modern life.

The third aspect of parental involvement is active participation in the schools. While desirable, such participation is neither realistic for many parents in Boston nor essential for the schools. The RAND report found that even parents who make a financial sacrifice to enroll their children in urban Catholic schools do not, and often cannot, become actively involved in the school. These schools' warrant for authoritative action stems in large part from their place within the larger tradition of Catholic schools: "Parents trust the school because of both the individuals who run it and the legacy it represents."[85] As Thernstrom has argued, we cannot expect single and low-income parents to visit classes, confer with teachers, volunteer in the schools, and attend PTA meetings, luxuries far easier for middle-class suburban parents to enjoy.[86] In the words of Kim Marshall, principal of the Mather School,

> We can't make [parents] do anything. We can try, and we constantly want to work with them. But the problem with people who say you can't have an effective school without parent involvement is that they have created an excuse and I think it can be a cop-out. . . . You take the kids as they enter the schools and you do the best job you can with that. The variables that I look at for effective schools are all within the control of the school.[87]

Interdistrict Choice

Interdistrict choice plans allow parents to select schools across district lines. While such plans had been proposed in Massachusetts for many years, it was not until March 1991 that the legislature approved a statewide interdistrict choice plan. The language of the legislation was very broad and many aspects of the plan were left unspecified, including fundamental questions of funding, selective admissions, and transportation. A commission charged to review these issues was overwhelmed by their complexity, and recommended that the plan's implementation be delayed. The commission wrestled with the most difficult issue, the funding formula. The resulting scheme, whereby the tuition for the receiving district is deducted from the Chapter 70 state aid of the student's home district, has been widely denounced as inequitable. Thus far the results of the plan are not encouraging: Few students are participating, some districts have refused to accept students, and media accounts of the plan have been negative. Schools already reeling from budget cutbacks have been further weakened by the loss of funds. Many Boston principals opposed the plan. As one said,

> It's going to be disastrous for the Boston school system because students will be transported to Weston. And Weston, a rich community, will take more money and smile—and Boston will go down deeper. It's not right and it's not fair and it shouldn't be that way. . . . The legislature should have allocated money from the state, but they didn't have it, so they decided to take it away from the poor.[88]

Of all choice proposals, interdistrict plans raise the most vexing policy questions. How much money should be provided to the receiving district for each child? If the funds are to follow the child, will the child's home district and the children who remain there be penalized? Or can states and localities afford to pay both districts for the child's education? Should receiving districts be allowed to admit students selectively? If so, will they simply "cream" the strongest and most motivated students from troubled urban schools?

Massachusetts has had in place a limited interdistrict choice plan, Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (Metco), for twenty-seven years. Metco allows Boston children of color, primarily blacks, to attend certain suburban schools. With a very limited number of available suburban seats, there is a long waiting list. Because of their previous social and educational deprivations, Metco students are disproportionately represented in the special needs and remedial programs of the receiving schools. Under the new choice plan, will receiving districts open their doors more widely to educationally disadvantaged children?

Minnesota has attempted interdistrict choice on the largest scale of any region in the country. Students can apply to any school in the state, restricted only by racial guidelines and available seats. The option was first offered in 1987, and by 1990–91 only 6,697 students, or less than 1 percent of the state's 732,000 public school students, chose to enroll in schools outside their district.[89] Most parents still want to send their child to a local school, and the limited participation has not brought pressure on the schools to improve.

Even if the funding problems could be resolved, the Commonwealth's interdistrict choice plan should not be seen as a primary tool for urban educational improvement in Massachusetts, a state where education is largely funded through property taxes. Limited parental interest, transportation expense (which is borne by parents), and the limited number of suburban seats likely to be available will together ensure that few urban children can benefit. Most will remain in dysfunctional city schools, unaffected by the plan.

Ironically, a full voucher plan would pose fewer problems of design and implementation, while affording much more choice. Under such a plan, participants would receive vouchers, which could be redeemed at any private or parochial school, in addition to the local public schools. New and expanded private schools could be expected to increase available seats. Unlike interdistrict public school choice, vouchers would create a true market for education. Resolving the many thorny questions posed by interdistrict choice will require an extraordinary investment of time and political capital. The same energies might better be applied to availing students of the greater educational opportunities of vouchers.

Voucher plans face daunting federal and state constitutional challenges over the use of public funds for religiously based schools. But a thoughtful design may withstand federal court scrutiny. Article XLVI of the Massachusetts Constitution, which expressly prohibits the expenditure of public funds for church-affiliated schools, could be amended, as it was in 1974 for institutions of higher education.

In the interim, the imperative to improve the public schools remains. Even if Boston parents were equipped with vouchers, the public schools would continue to enroll the majority of students. By the same token, the teachers and staff of the Boston public schools should recognize the likelihood—some would say inevitability—that a voucher system will eventually be instituted, and act decisively *now* to recreate their schools. Staff are today so accustomed to the innumerable constraints on their performance that few employees have a vision of what it would be like to work unfettered by them. Yet only if they demand freedom from these constraints will they be able to compete when the public school monopoly is broken.

Critique of Choice

The arguments against choice are many and varied. Perhaps the most frequently heard concerns are the fate of students in failing schools, the problem of "creaming," the high cost of choice programs, the inattention to supply of good schools, and claims that gains under choice are due to other causes and that choice cannot function when confined to the public schools.

Critics contend that choice plans are inequitable because they do nothing for students left behind in unpopular and failing schools. If choice were implemented in our large cities, "thousands of poor children would be left behind, the detritus of disintegrating schools."[90] The analogy to the marketplace is flawed, critics say: Schools cannot go out of business because students would have nowhere to go.[91] But a school is not a building. Replacing the school's management over the summer with a fresh, competent team leaves no child stranded. And, as argued earlier, unfettered competition will benefit all students, as competitive pressures force schools to improve. There is no reason to believe that any school will get worse under choice, or that any student's fate will be worse than it is today.

Another objection is that good students will end up concentrated in the best schools, leaving low-income and difficult-to-educate children in the worst schools. Isabel Sawhill argues that promoting choice for urban students "conflicts with the rising body of evidence that poor families are often beset with any multitude of problems, making it difficult for them to cope with the added responsibility—such as evaluating different schools."[92] This risk is mitigated by several factors. For one, the objection assumes that the parents of such children will make poor choices, presumably because they lack the time or the ability to distinguish between good and bad schools. This is an elitist presumption; as discussed earlier, virtually all parents are aware of which Boston schools are the worst. One need not be middle class or college educated to make good choices for one's children. As long as most parents can tell the best from the worst, and as long as the least chosen schools are closed to give way to better schools, even the children of the least discerning parents will, in the long run, be better off then they are today. Critics fail to take into account that a true choice system is dynamic.[93]

Choice is expensive, critics assert. Parent information centers and transportation are both costly. Undeniably, strong PICs require a major investment. Staff must be capable and trained, and an aggressive outreach to every parent in the district is essential. Transportation is also costly; in Boston it is the largest expense after personnel costs. But *intra*district choice, choice confined to one district's schools, is much cheaper than transporting students to suburban schools under an interdistrict plan. In Boston, several new schools-within-schools could share the same building that today houses a failing or unpopular school. With a greater variety of choices in closer reach of each family, the number of choice zones could be increased (from the current three to six). With shorter bus routes, the district's transportation costs would drop sharply. If many administrative responsibilities were shifted to the school site, overhead expenses would be likely to fall as well. At the school, these functions would be fulfilled much as they are in the pared-down office of the private school, at lower cost and with less bureaucracy than in the current centralized administration. In turn, more money would be available for instruction.

As Thernstrom and others have noted, the freedom of parents to select a school does nothing in itself to make schools better or to increase the number of good schools. Choice alone is no substitute for making all schools good schools.[94] If choice is taken strictly as a student assignment plan (as it is in nearly all current implementations), the charge is accurate. Choice will only increase overall educational opportunity if the plan also *frees* the supply of schools to diversify, so that parents will have real alternatives from which to choose. New schools and programs must be chartered, and ineffective ones discontinued. As yet, few proposals have been advanced that address how to free this supply.

Some critics charge that educational gains under choice are due to other causes.[95] They most often cite the case of New York City's District 4, in East Harlem. In 1975, the district ranked last out of 32 districts in standardized test scores. After 20 alternative schools were launched with distinct curricula, missions, and pedagogies, and a system of limited choice was instituted, scores jumped to 18th in the city. As early as 1982, hundreds of white students from other districts chose to attend schools in the predominantly black and Hispanic district.[96] Today, more than 1,500 students from outside the district attend its schools.

Critics attribute the improvement not to choice but, variously, to extra funding, an infusion of high-scoring students from outside the district, and, most interestingly, inspired top-down leadership to forge distinctive schools. It is true that the district received additional federal funds for magnet schools. But most large systems receive tens of millions of dollars in external funds to pay for all sorts of dedicated programs and decentralized innovations, yet fail to post similar gains.[97] Myron Lieberman's charge that interdistrict transfers enriched the mix of students has been persuasively countered by the program's developer. Fifteen percent of the students were reading at or above grade level in 1972; by the mid-1980s the proportion achieving at that level had increased to almost 64 percent.[98] Informal studies of transfer students in East Harlem show that the rise in scores cannot be attributed to the strength of students entering the system. A 1983 analysis of 1,500 transfer students found that 51 percent were reading at or above grade level and 49 percent below, not significantly different from the district's results as a whole. A similarly conducted informal survey in 1992 of 1,350 transfer students revealed that 49 percent are at or above grade level, and 51 percent are not.[99]

The last criticism of East Harlem's success is the most interesting and pertinent to this report. To argue that the dramatic improvement in student outcomes came from the small size of the new schools, the schools' inspired leadership, the increased commitment of the schools' teachers, or the enlightened administration that enabled the program, is in each case to underscore an element of an effective choice program. Each is a tribute to—not an indictment of—East Harlem's plan. Choice plainly will not work when the supply of schools is left unchanged and all schools follow the same formula. East Harlem's program is one of the few choice implementations that worked precisely because the district leadership recognized that running a rigged lottery for student assignments would itself do nothing to improve educational results.

Skeptics have argued that choice cannot create a true market if it is confined to the public schools. Lieberman contends that educators will only accept choice plans that avoid competition, and likens public school choice to a chain of grocery stores that have the same owner.[100]

Not only are the stores cut from the same cloth, but the owner's interest is in ensuring that each store prospers and that his investment in each is justified—not in mimicking the market to let only the fittest stores survive. If the analogy is correct, then a market can be created only by expanding choice to private and parochial schools, each with its respective owner and interests.

Chubb and Moe make a similar argument.[101] Public school reformers may indeed acknowledge that effective schools have clear goals, teacher professionalism, and team-like cooperation—qualities that flourish when schools are afforded autonomy and freed from bureaucratic restraints. But since the public schools are ultimately under political control, Chubb and Moe contend that they are inevitably subject to bureaucratization and its debilitating effects:

> Direct democratic control stimulates a political struggle over the right to impose higher-order values on the schools through public authority, and this in turn promotes bureaucracy—which is both a crucial means of ensuring that these higher-order values are actually implemented at the school level (by personnel who may not agree with them) and a crucial means of insulating them from subversion by opposing groups and officials who may gain hold of public authority in the future.[102]

This last critique of public school choice is impossible to dismiss and states the question for educators in Boston: Are public school teachers and administrators committed to choice merely as a student assignment plan? Or do they see the need for radical changes in the way schools are created, the autonomy they are afforded, and the means by which they recruit staff and students?

True reform will require that all participants in the schools have the courage to see that the existing paradigms ensure the continued decline of public schools. As confidence in public schools wanes, vouchers are gaining support from across the political spectrum. If the schools improve sharply, the pressure may diffuse. If the legislature should decide in five years to grant vouchers, the public school monopoly would be broken and only the best public schools would survive. Only if all parties embrace a fundamentally new way of doing business today can the schools be transformed into institutions that can compete. But ineffectual reforms will seal the fate of the schools and ensure the loss of many jobs.

Demand and Supply

School choice plans, including Boston's controlled choice, have focused on the demand side of the system, the means by which parents and students choose and are assigned to schools. But choice exists in name only if all schools are largely the same. As one Boston headmaster said, "I think, in concept, everyone should have the right to choose the school that they want to go to. But I think school choice in Boston is pretty much a joke. Because it's a choice among what? Within BPS, I think it is pretty hard to define what you are making a choice among."[103] The challenge is to free the supply side of education and foster distinctive and vital schools that would provide real choices. As one principal said,

> If a school is attracting a lot of kids, you might ask why. We did a lot of recruitment and publicity. People know some of the things that are going on in our school that are positive. I think schools within the district should have competition, and every school should have a distinct theme. And you would go to that particular school because you wanted to study something special. For each school, there should be something there, a reason why kids choose it.[104]

Controlled choice will not free existing schools from the constraints that ensure their mediocre sameness, or provide for the launching of new schools and educational programs, or for the expansion of popular and oversubscribed schools. Will Boston's second major reform, school-based management, accomplish these goals? That is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

School-Based Management

IN SEPTEMBER 1989, the Boston School Committee and the Boston Teachers Union signed a new three-year contract.[1] Boston's business community, which had taken an active role in the contract negotiations, was ebullient. "A landmark document in education," commented Ferdinand Colloredo-Mansfeld, an executive at Cabot Partners and a long-time advocate of school reform.[2] Boston had followed the lead of other large districts in adopting the fashionable reform of "school-based management/shared decision making" (SBM/SDM) pioneered in Dade County, Florida, and now instituted in New York, Los Angeles, and many other cities. SBM/SDM, the contract explains, is "a process in which all members of the education community at the school level collaborate in identifying problems, defining goals, formulating policy, and implementing programs."[3] Along with hefty salary increases costing the city $93.6 million over three years, the contract sought to decentralize the administration of the schools.[4] According to the district's new office of school-based management,

> The focus of SBM/SDM is to improve the educational quality of our schools. . . . Instead of most decisions being made by the central administration at Court

Street or the zone office, elected councils at the individual school site will be able to identify problems, establish goals, and set and implement policies. The body that will have this power is called the school site council.[5]

Under the contract, schools can choose to become SBM/SDM schools with the vote of the principal and 60 percent of the teachers. Responsibility for school governance is assumed by the school site council. Depending on the size of the school and the grade levels taught, councils range from nine to thirteen voting members and comprise the principal, representatives elected by parents and teachers, and, at the high school level, a student representative.[6] In theory, school-based management both decentralizes and democratizes school governance by empowering teachers to share in all decision making, including budgeting.

An Evaluation of School-Based Management

Miami's Dade County has experimented with decentralized school management since the 1970s, and first instituted school-based management four years ago in 33 schools. Its experience in pioneering the innovation is particularly instructive.

A report on the Dade County program opens with a lengthy caveat. The thrust of school-based management, it reminds readers, is the "professionalization of teaching."[7] The involvement of teachers in decision making at the school site only *indirectly* improves teaching and educational outcomes. The impact of SBM's innovations is thus inadequately assessed by standardized test results.

As might be expected, the report found that SBM initially had a slightly positive effect on school climate. Surveys of teachers and principals found that the status of teachers was perceived to be higher in SBM schools than in conventional schools. After three years of SBM, however, the surveys found that such variables as staff involvement, expectations and attitudes toward the innovation, collegiality, awareness of the project's features, and participation in nontraditional teacher roles were on the *decline*, though they remained favorable. Principals thought the innovation had made their jobs more difficult.[8]

SBM led to no significant academic gains. Attendance was somewhat higher in SBM schools than elsewhere in the county, but this discrepancy predated SBM. Suspension rates were lower in middle schools and high schools, and the dropout rate declined in SBM schools. But standardized test scores showed no improvement over the period.[9]

In a four-year study of school-based management, Roger Jenni coded and analyzed the minutes of 78 school site council meetings in Minnesota.[10] He supplemented these data with observations of council meetings and structured interviews with council participants.

Only 55 decisions were made at all of the 78 meetings studied.[11] Moreover, only 12 of these 55 decisions involved important organizational change: five decisions dealt with budget issues, two with personnel, and five concerned communication. In the 78 meetings, not a single decision was made that dealt with school curriculum. Instead, the councils considered such matters as discipline, attendance, lunchroom schedules, and even the type of soft drinks available in the staff lounge.[12] Interestingly, the researcher found that decision making peaked in the second and third years of the council's existence, and then diminished considerably. The Dade County study reports a similar decline in popularity, with teacher support for the program waning in the fourth year.[13] Over time, the councils made sharply fewer decisions, abandoning issues at the discussion stage rather than deciding on actions. Jenni concluded that this reversion of the council

> could indicate a reluctance on the part of personnel associated with the school to follow through with the idea that the site council should be a decision making body. . . . It appeared that the site council meetings were a place where information was shared, discussion ensued, but serious decision making was generally avoided.[14]

Los Angeles, the nation's second-largest school district (after New York), adopted school-based management/shared decision making in the 1989–1990 school year. In preparation for full-fledged SBM, schools established site councils of teachers, parents, and administrators to make decisions regarding budgets, discipline, equipment, scheduling, and staff development. While the division of responsibility between the school and central administration was unchanged under this version of shared decision making, schools that successfully applied for SBM could gain greater authority from the district in the second year. A detailed report by the district's Independent Analysis Unit (released while Boston was launching its own program) reviewed the progress of the ten schools.[15] The findings echo those of the other districts.

SDM's collegial process, the hallmark of the innovation, was realized in some schools. Respect and cooperation between participants were achieved. But other schools suffered from divisive antagonisms between teachers and administrators. The role of the principal was not clearly defined, and principals, anticipating criticism, often hesitated to lead. The councils undertook mainly uncontroversial decisions like the scheduling of school events and teacher access to copying machines. Discipline was an exception: Teachers successfully pressed for more punitive approaches, including suspension. Parents also welcomed the opportunity to discuss discipline, but felt out of place when the councils turned to supply budgets and other business matters. Many important fiscal decisions, however, were not even in the councils' domain. Categorical programs, like bilingual education and federal Chapter 1 funds for low-income children, were not under their control, nor were 80 percent of the remaining discretionary funds. When these discretionary funds were cut, the councils' budgetary impact was further limited. In summary, the report concluded that the first year "did not generally result in major changes at the schools we studied."[16]

The Independent Analysis Unit's report highlights several key problems with SDM. First, the plan does not address the evolution of the principal's role. Some principals believed that SDM reduced their function to that of an administrative secretary responsible for implementing the councils' policies, rather than a leader who "consults, involves, inspires, teaches, and motivates teachers."[17] The report recommends a stronger leadership role for principals, concluding that SDM

> does not eliminate but increases the need for a skilled leader at each school. The district should clearly and publicly define the principal's role. . . . District training, evaluation and placement of principals must increasingly emphasize leadership skills as well as management skills.[18]

Because principals were confused about their function but eager to demonstrate commitment to the process, most proposals for SBM were developed by teachers and then approved by principals even when the district's conditions—a common vision for the school, a collegial process, and community involvement—were not met.

The report contends that "student outcomes are most likely to improve if the principal articulates a vision of school success and mobilizes other members of the school community to achieve it."[19] In fact, the report implies that, as might be expected, the schools that enjoyed the most collegial staff relations both before and after the program's inception were those in which the strength of the principal's individual leadership was the *least* weakened by SDM's prescriptions:

> All principals, even those who are not perceived by their staffs to be collegial, make attempts to consult teachers about important decisions. Some principals are, by experience, maturity, personality, and style, more self-confident and effective in collegial governance; the effective leaders are able to communicate to teachers a true sense of shared mission. Typically, these principals successfully involved teachers in important school decisions before shared decision making came to the school.[20]

Second, the report finds a fundamental incompatibility between SDM's expectation of collegiality and the institutionalized antagonism of labor/management relations. At only two of the ten schools was the relationship between the principal and the union cordial. The debilitating traditional roles dictated by the union/management paradigm undermined the program's potential. For example, district administration publicly minimized its genuine support for the reform, bolstering teachers' misconceptions that the program was a union initiative obtained through collective bargaining. Mistrust was exacerbated. Teachers then directed their hostility to management's representatives, the principals. The report concludes,

> It is traditional in collective bargaining that top management and union leaders express great public antagonism while remaining able to maintain a respectful and more businesslike relationship in private bargaining sessions. This tradition, however, is dysfunctional in a case like LAUSD [Los Angeles Unified School District] today, where *local* managers (principals) and union

leaders (chapter chairs) are expected to arrive at consensus decisions in a non-adversarial atmosphere.[21]

Third, a survey of teachers disclosed that their enthusiasm waned in some schools when they discovered that administrative tasks were more onerous than expected and that meaningful participation would require them to devote substantial time without extra compensation.[22]

Fourth, parental representation on the school site councils was problematic. Parent members often dropped out because of language barriers or time conflicts and because much discussion concerned matters like budgeting and equipment that were irrelevant to their concerns.[23]

Fifth, the report questions the preparation of council members to make many educational decisions. It calls for increased training for council members, not only in matters of process like reaching consensus, but also in substantive areas such as theories of discipline, techniques for increasing parental involvement, and the foundations of the state's curriculum.[24]

Finally, the authors of the report note the absence of accountability in the SBM design. Councils did not follow up their initial decisions and plans by evaluating student achievement levels. "To this point," they explain, "the Board has only dealt with evaluating what schools *plan* to do under School Based Management, not with what these schools actually *accomplish*."[25]

The experiences in these three states are consistent with the SBM review literature. In a 1989 study, Karin Lindquist and John Mauriel found that in the first major SBM sites (Dade County, Florida; Rochester, New York; Hammond, Indiana; and Salt Lake City, Utah), decision-making authority has not been meaningfully delegated to the schools in the three key areas of curriculum, budget, and personnel.[26] Councils were generally not making substantive decisions, and it was unclear whether members would remain interested in making minor decisions and serving in an advisory capacity. Training and money were persistent problems; decentralized decision making requires sophisticated preparation, which members often lacked. Teachers, frequently concerned about compromising their union standing, were reluctant to make personnel decisions. Lindquist and Mauriel conclude,

> The conflicts over delegation and advocacy, the need for training, the requirements for time and resources, and the fact that many site councils begin to falter after initial bursts of enthusiasm, point to the size and scope of the problems involved when schools try to adopt SBM. For many school systems the adoption of SBM means major changes in organizational structure, management style, and allocation of power and resources, a need for new accountability systems, and a serious renegotiation of the respective governance roles and authority of the school board, the teachers' union, the central office, and the community stakeholders.

If these broad changes are not made, "SBM will be just another moderately helpful public relations and communications vehicle tinkering with the peripheral issues of school governance and management."[27]

In Boston, the city's finest principals consult closely with their staff, and many have established councils of staff and parents to whom they delegate responsibilities and refer issues for discussion. The same is true in New York. At one highly successful school in Brooklyn, P.S. 41, four teachers and two assistant principals meet for 45 minutes a week to decide major policy questions. New York's chancellor, Joseph A. Fernandez, visited the school on his first day in office and proclaimed it a model of SBM. Later, he asked the school's principal, Herbert Ross, to serve as his director of school-based management. As Stephanie Gutmann has observed in her analysis of SBM in New York,

> The goals of school-based management are laudable, but they cannot be created by administrative fiat. . . . Trying to explain P.S. 41's success, Herbert Ross says, "It's just common sense. There's no magic secret. I think [whether SBM succeeds] is primarily a reflection of who runs the school and how he or she chooses to get direction." . . . In other words, it is a function of leadership. Ross didn't set out to "implement SBM," he set out to improve his school.
>
> "It didn't happen overnight," notes Ross. "It happened piece by piece over the years, after, for example, certain teachers who didn't fit with the school left voluntarily. We had so many things in place, except maybe the name. . ." At P.S. 41, the leadership came first, the label came later. The basic, unfixable error plaguing SBM is that it tries to reverse the process: to impose the label and hope the leadership comes along.[28]

Since SBM was launched, more than 200 New York schools have signed up. As in other districts, SBM has not relaxed but strengthened the union's grip on the schools. When substantive policy issues are decided, they nearly always impinge on collective bargaining agreements and must be approved by the union. Gutmann quotes one principal, Harvey Newman, who explains,

> Nothing happens at the policy level without the support and approval of the union. . . . There is no initiative that the chancellor dare undertake without union endorsement. . . . The union has become management.[29]

As in other districts, schools can apply for waivers from union contracts, but they must be approved by both the chancellor and the union.

Much like reports from other SBM districts, success in New York's program is always depicted in terms of the process—not the actual results, but what Gutmann calls the "everybody-felt-listened-to-and-appreciated, nobody-pulled-anybody's-hair-out" type of success.[30]

School-Based Management in Boston

Despite its failings in other cities, SBM/SDM was launched with great fanfare in Boston in the academic year 1990–91. After only one full year, it is too soon to evaluate the program conclusively. But some key questions can already be answered. Did Boston officials take account of the experiences of other cities, anticipate the program's known pitfalls, and tailor the plan accordingly? Did they garner broad support for the program? Did participating schools receive SBM/SDM well? Together, the answers to these questions will place Boston's among the strongest or the weakest implementations of SBM. That, in turn, will tell us whether to expect greater or lesser gains from the program than those of other cities.

Eighteen of Boston's 117 schools chose to participate in "Cycle 1" in 1990–91. An additional 14 schools joined the program in its second cycle. Initially, the provision for school-based management in Article III of the teachers' contract was hailed as a leading-edge innovation and resulted in national publicity. But district administrators, in interviews, said they thought of SBM/SDM as just one of many Court Street programs. There was no sense from top administrators that Court Street was particularly committed to its success, regarded it as a singular priority, or was prepared to make an extraordinary investment of leadership, management time, or funds to see it through. In an interview several months after it was launched, the program's director, Mary Brown Daniels, expressed a curious indifference about the program's success. When asked about particular programs and success rates in SBM schools, she answered, "The schools that are doing it have varied levels of success. They're at different stages . . . I mean there are so many days in a week, so many hours and all that stuff. They're having varied success." She even conceded that the SBM councils "hardly ever get to what it's all supposed to be about: our kids, education, academics." Apparently unfamiliar with the extensive literature on SBM, she had little interest in learning from the experience of other districts to avoid their mistakes. "We're learning as we go," she said. "It's one day at a time."[31]

Many teachers are as cynical about SBM/SDM as they were about earlier Court Street initiatives. New programs, they feel, are often oversold to the public, and teachers and the schools are asked to accommodate disruptive new practices. Indeed, most Court Street programs lack the requisites for success: accountability, stability, primacy, resources, and top-level leadership. In time, they are discarded for the next innovation. As one dedicated but frustrated teacher put it,

> BPS, as an entity, does not know what it is. I think it is a fractured, damaged nonviable entity that is simply a name for a conglomerate of things that don't work. . . . I think that we've had a very poorly managed, top-down system for the thirty years I've been in it. A lot of it was due to school committees that were dreadful. . . . We've had ten superintendents, or something like that, in the last thirty years. That's absurd. No corporation could stay in business that way. . . . It's been reorganized again and again. It's been reorganized with each new superintendent. And people have been shifted around. People have been damaged. We have a lot of people in the system who have been so shell-shocked and hurt by the system that they don't function very well, even though they continue to work in it.[32]

As one SBM principal said, "Systematically, it's not working at all. The reason is, I don't feel true collaboration between central office and the union."[33] Others contend that they already manage by consensus.[34] Many of the principals who already govern through shared decision making are quick to state that not only are they already consulting teachers but their management procedures are better than those prescribed by SBM. One teacher explained, "A lot of schools have had forms of SBM for a long time, and those schools function well."[35] The principal of a highly regarded and perennially oversubscribed high school said,

> I believe in shared decision making and I think it could work—I don't think that it is workable the way it's set up right now. That's why we haven't bought into it.
>
> We've been sharing decisions for a long time—since I've been here. Because I know from my charge, which was to change the focus of the school, that it wasn't going to happen by myself—I had to have people on board with me. And so when we started making changes, we did it as a staff. . . . It wasn't me telling them, "This is what we're going to do." Because that just doesn't work. So we've been doing that all along and whenever major change is going to happen in the school, it is a staff and parent decision, and sometimes students.[36]

Many principals were initially skeptical and chose to watch the fate of the Cycle 1 schools from the sidelines. As problems developed with training, inadequate resources, and denials of waivers, the principals felt their skepticism was justified. One strong principal commented,

> The only condition under which SBM will be in this school is if positive views come in from other schools. The attitude now is let's wait and see if it works. Until that happens, there's nothing that's going to change those votes. We're doing fine without it.[37]

Ted Dooley, executive director of the Boston Compact, a business-education partnership, said that the importance of the contract is that "we won more accountability, and they got more authority and a hefty pay increase."[38] The union/management paradigm of bargaining and concession still prevails in the Boston schools. Thus when many schools said no to SBM, some administrators and business leaders were angered. Teachers, in their view, had received an increase in salary to compensate for SBM's added responsibility.[39] Yet businessmen would never manage a business this way. Paying for someone to take on increased responsibility is the epitome of bad management. An executive does not negotiate with a recalcitrant manager to reach a price at which the manager will be willing to innovate and take on more responsibility. Rather, the executive promotes those who step forward with ideas and who welcome accountability. It is not suprising that site council members in other districts lost enthusiasm as they discovered that managing an organization was demanding and time consuming. The hunger to lead is innate; it cannot be created by Court Street's fiat.

The program's launch was also marred. Training for SBM participants was delayed when a legal battle held up the contract for facilitators to the school site councils, along with many other Boston city contracts.[40] Some principals questioned the training's value, delay or not. One well-regarded principal said she "does not believe it's ever going to work the way it is now. . . . Teachers don't have the background, they don't have the staff development or the education. I don't care that the facilitators kept the faculty for a day and did team building and had them run some physical courses so that they trusted one another. . . . They're not prepared for it."[41]

Criticism was also leveled at the council elections. Some charged that because elections for parent representatives to the school site councils were rushed, the resulting members were not representative of the schools' communities.[42] Another common complaint from both principals and teachers was that school-based management could not function in a period of diminishing and unstable resources.

The experience of Steven Leonard, principal of the Martin Luther King Middle School, highlights both the inherent defects of school-based management and the flaws in Boston's implementation. Leonard is a strong leader. Like many effective urban principals, he knows that to succeed, he has to be ready to bend and break the rules that ensure mediocrity. In his fifth year as principal, he has improved staff morale, enrollment, student attendance, parental participation, and academic results.[43] When he arrived in 1987, enrollment for the school was 360 students and declining. A 37 percent increase has brought enrollment up to 493 students. The school boasts a 90 percent attendance rate, 5 percent higher than when Leonard became principal. The proportion of students retained in grade each year has dropped from one-third to less than 10 percent. After the 1985–86 academic year, the Martin Luther King School was ranked 22d out of 22 schools, but the most recent survey puts it in fifth place.[44] Leonard's school is now oversubscribed.

He achieved these gains by successfully applying to become a Carnegie school, absorbing a BPS alternative school program, and assembling a capable staff. This allowed him to create four small schools, or clusters, within the school, and to reduce student-teacher ratios. But school-based management's newly mandated student-teacher ratios required that he lose nine staff members—in the name of systemwide equality. "Our reward for our success," says Leonard, "is to get the school we built decimated."[45] To him, there is no advantage in becoming an SBM school:

> School-based management, right now, to me, is saying that you have the option to have a *group* of people pull the trigger. . . . Right now, the only real decision [under SBM/SDM] is how to reduce everything that you have. . . . Implicit in the staffing formula is the total destruction of the way we do business here.[46]

More importantly, the new mandates and rigidities of SBM would weaken Leonard's function as chief executive. His management style was consultative from the start, and he relied heavily on a school site council that he instituted. Leonard described his approach to teachers this way:

> You're the professional; you're closer to the problem than I am. I'm the cheerleader. I present the problems to you. You tell me, based on your experience, how we should solve them. And then I get the resources we need to do it.[47]

In the culture he created, Leonard relied on consensus to foster staff ownership of decisions and maintain subscription to the school's goals. But he relied on his contacts and his knowledge of the system to overcome obstacles in implementation:

> I know that I can play the game the traditional way—the people that I can go to get a good word in, and all of that—get what I need for the school. And that is where, in a way, school-based management is a handicap, because I know the steps to take to get whatever I want in most cases. And doing that by myself is always going to be more effective than doing it with 10, 12, or 13 people.[48]

Leonard, like many new SBM principals, expected that the program would make it easier to get district support for initiatives. He was disappointed:

> If I call down and say . . . I want to do something, the typical bureaucratic wall shouldn't be in my way. . . . [The administration] should be in the mode of "how can I help you?". . . But it's not happening.
>
> I'm not willing to put my school up to gamble on whether School-Based Management can work or not. I know how to save my school, as an individual—as the principal. That will probably still involve a lot of shared decision making. But it is completely away from School-Based Management. Because what I'm going to end up doing is mobilizing my school to make a full-scale assault on the powers that be.[49]

Leonard firmly believes that small classes are the crucial factor for successfully educating his students, most of whom are impoverished. The new guidelines mandate a teacher-student ratio of 1:30. Leonard says this threatens the classroom that is barely functioning with 28 students. The teacher's repertoire cannot possibly accommodate additional children's needs. The result: more children are referred to special education, which has legally ensured staffing levels.

Another principal said, "Essentially we have SBM here." The first year he did not offer the choice to his faculty because of the short histories of so many Court Street programs: "If the first year doesn't get off properly, it's going to be a bust and nobody's ever going to want to do it." The next year he investigated the SBM option with his teachers and they realized they had SBM, "but didn't call it that."[50] Instead they investigated federal funding opportunities available through the Chapter 1 program.

In the first major study of SBM/SDM in Boston, the Citywide Educational Coalition observed school site council meetings and conducted more than 100 individual and group interviews with program participants, including staff and parents at 25 of the 32 participating schools. The report's primary finding was that

> a substantial majority of Boston SBM/SDM participants interviewed could not point to any significant change in the "teaching and learning that goes on in the classroom" and few could identify plans for such change.[51]

CWEC adds that "there seems to be a gap between what should be the primary goal of SBM/SDM—improving education—and what is happening" and recommends that the district "firmly establish 'educational improvement' as the central goal of SBM/SDM."[52] In an interview, the report's principal investigator added that "it was not often that councils were involved with restructuring plans."[53] The report urges the district to adopt a new mission statement for SBM/SDM that defines the principal purpose as improving the *quality of instruction* rather than changing the school climate and participation. School improvement plans should include provisions for measuring SBM's effect on student performance and a range of other criteria, including attendance, standardized test scores, and student self-evaluations.[54]

The report details a need to improve communication within and between SBM schools, so that one school may learn from another what is working and what is not.[55] CWEC also concludes that SBM has transferred little power and accountability to the school site councils:

> Most of the participants interviewed expressed a feeling of frustration at not being able to make "real" decisions at their schools. One principal pleads, "What power do we have now that is different than before? Almost none. This [SBM/SDM] is a sham!"[56]

Most SBM/SDM teachers and principals would welcome a greater degree of accountability if they were given more control. The new ability of SBM/SDM schools to fill posted vacancies from the transfer pool of teachers, without regard to seniority, is not enough. As one teacher said, "Let us decide who works here, how we spend our money and all that, and then judge how well we do!"[57]

Perhaps most importantly, the CWEC report found that the school site councils were not taking many risks. A good indicator of the boldness of a school's vision is the number of waivers it requests for exemptions from current policies, contracts, and regulations. Over the first academic year, there were fewer than 29 waiver requests from all SBM schools for relief from standard regulations.[58] With a waiver process in Boston more cumbersome than in most SBM cities, the district does little to encourage risk taking. Waivers must be approved by the zone office, the SBM central committee, the SBM steering committee, the union executive board, and the union membership. The process can take months.

The three-year teachers' contract will expire at the end of the 1991–92 school year. The report closes with several recommendations that would require changes in the new agreement: compose a new mission for SBM/SDM, measure the program's success in terms of student outcomes (not process), let schools control all staff hiring, increase the schools' budgetary authority, lengthen the work day, strengthen the process for evaluating schools, and streamline the waiver process.

As table 2-1 summarizes, many of the waiver requests are for relief from the numbingly detailed rules of central administration. Schools have filed waiver requests simply to be excused from a spelling contest or to change a form. One such request, to allow the school to hold one day of professional development for its staff, required no less than the state board of education's consent. Only three of the waivers refer to changes in school programs, such as mainstreaming bilingual and special education students, or eligibility criteria for remedial services. Ten of the 29 waivers pertain to union contracts or district rules. Two of these are for actions already permitted by union contract (#20 and #28); waivers were therefore not required.

Of the remaining eight, two pertain to specific individuals in the schools, and the union agreed to the requests (#21 and #27). The union did agree to #29. But as of 13 March 1992, more than 18 months after the start of the program, the various unions and the district office had not agreed to any of the remaining five requests.[59] Not incidently, all these requests involved a union or the district demonstrating flexibility beyond granting an exception for a single staff member.

TABLE 2-1

WAIVER REQUESTS FROM SBM SCHOOLS, 1990–91

Waiver Request (Disposition as of Academic Year End)

1. To provide Chapter 1 services to any student in the school in need of extra assistance, regardless of MAT test score. (Approved)
2. To keep all children in their September-assigned kindergarten session at the school. (Approved)
3. To include grade 1 and K1 students in the present Writing to Read program. (Approved)
4. To better coordinate substitute teachers at the school. (Approved)
5. To allow a teacher-in-charge to take over for principal when he or she leaves the school, and pay stipend to appointed teacher. (Approved)
6. To forbid students to enter the school building if more than 45 minutes late. (Approved, after first being rejected by school committee)
7. To change the Warning Notice Form at the school. (Approved)
8. To change slightly the school's student report card format. (Approved for next year's pilot program)
9. To mainstream bilingual and 502.4 students at the school into regular classes when feasible. (Approved)
10. To be able to hire a Whole Language Vocal Music Teacher, a new position. (Approved, through transfer process)
11. To waive first grade students at the school from Metropolitan Achievement Tests. (Approved)
12. To waive grades 1, 2 and 3 in the school from citywide spelling contest. (Approved for next year)
13. To be able to hold evening meetings at the school with approval of Planning and Engineering department. (Approved)
14. To provide transportation for afterschool programs in the school. (Approved on a case-by-case basis, subject to equipment availability)
15. To provide one full day of professional development for teachers in one school program, including a lunch for participants. (Approved by the state board of education)
16. To allow the site council to screen paraprofessional applicants at the school. (Held per principal's request)
17. To reinstitute the former policy of allowing a school to buy back sick leave. (Referred to the teachers' union)

18. To be able to open buildings without presence of a custodian for meetings of fewer than 25 people. (Referred to custodians' union)
19. To permit school site council to screen candidates for custodian from most senior applicants. (Referred to custodians' union)
20. To permit school site council to screen and interview prospective teachers after the transfer period expires at the end of the year. (Referred to teachers' union)
21. To be able to keep the current Support Specialist personnel. (Referred to teachers' union)
22. To ensure the school's second year kindergarten children a place in the school's first grade if they select it as their first choice. (Referred to steering committee)
23. To be able to deposit certain external funds into bank. (Denied by City Hall, referred back to steering committee)
24. To have input into who is assigned to special education paraprofessional and therapist positions at the school.
25. To be able to keep the current school hours for next year. (Referred to steering committee)
26. To reduce the number of bilingual seats at the school. (Referred to Department of Implementation)
27. To be able to select the nurse for the school's fully integrated special needs program. (Referred to Personnel)
28. To be able to screen candidates for any opening including long-term substitutes. (Pending)
29. To provide coverage for principal when he must leave the building. (Pending)

Source: Office of School-Based Management, Boston Public Schools, 1991.

In one case, the SBM office discouraged a school's principal from petitioning for a waiver for its vital after school program:

> The major cost of our after school program was paying for custodial overtime because you can't have a building in Boston open after hours unless you pay custodians time and a half. The custodian in this building is getting paid more than the teachers who are running the program! We petitioned for a waiver—in an SBM school you can do that. Then we were told that's part of the custodial contract. I said, "Look. I'm in the building anyway for the program. I'm here 'till five thirty. I *know* how to open the building, lock the building, set the alarm; I know how to turn on and off the electricity and all that—I'm the

principal! I'm here so why can't I?" "No, no, that's the custodial contract; they'll grieve it if you violate the contract," etc. So we couldn't do that.[60]

In August 1991, the school department's own office of research and development issued an evaluation report on SBM's first year. The report opens with a lengthy disclaimer, which is quite revealing:

> The purpose of this document is not to assess the successes of SBM/SDM. . . . Unrealistic expectations, such as [that] SBM/SDM will be an overnight cure or panacea for the system's ills, will serve no purpose but to frustrate the dedicated professionals committed to this experiment and unfairly threaten the integrity of the SBM/SDM model. Therefore, this document refrains from measuring the level of success the schools may have attained, thus far, and instead examines the Cycle 1 schools for signs of progress toward optimal levels of operation within the SBM/SDM framework. Based on the findings presented in this report, it can be concluded that the Cycle 1 schools, as a whole, did indeed make progress in implementing SBM/SDM, and by sharing their experiences, have provided useful information to other schools contemplating SBM/SDM.[61]

In other words, this evaluation report of SBM does not attempt to evaluate SBM's results. The report finds that schools that started SBM last year did in fact start SBM. In the report, the surveyed schools share their feelings with other schools about "process."

In the executive summary, amidst statements like "SBM is a structuring initiative that can be implemented successfully by schools of varied histories of operation," several real findings are buried:

> However, trust between constituencies (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents) appears to be an important precursor to establishing a shared vision of SBM/SDM. The lack of a common vision for SBM/SDM, and/or the existence of conflicting expectations with respect to the role of the SSC [school site council], can generate distrust, impede implementation of the SSC, and jeopardize the ultimate success of SBM/SDM at the school level.[62]

In other words, if the staff, leaders, and clients of the school do not trust each other before starting SBM, they will trust each other even less later. They will not agree on what SBM is or why they are doing it.

The odds that school-based management will spawn radical improvements in the Boston schools are slim for several reasons: the existing paradigms of the public school are unchanged, limited authority is delegated to the school site, mandated committees and consensus are unlikely to effect substantive change, and individual leadership is undermined.

Already SBM is disparaged by many outside the schools as just more tinkering, and inside as the Court Street program *du jour.* This should surprise no one. Under SBM, the three existing paradigms of urban education are unchanged.

First, the focus on prescription and process drives Court Street to mandate every detail of school governance, from council representation and election, to the submission of minutes, rather than allowing schools to organize as best fits their mission and values. The purported freedom from district bureaucracy is worse than illusory under SBM; it is a tease. SBM was intended to empower teachers, but many participants perceive only new paperwork to complete and new rules to follow, with no additional resources granted in exchange. One principal told of Court Street's new demands:

> The central office for SBM said to us, "You have to submit the minutes of your meetings to us." We're a small and informal school, so our minutes were handwritten. We send them our minutes: "We can't read these." And they send them back to us. "You have to type them up." All right, what that means is you take a secretary off whatever she's doing for the children so she can type up these minutes. It came to the point where they said, "We have no evidence that you have SBM going at your school because we don't have these minutes in the format that we wanted." They didn't give us a format, so we had developed our own. Then in January they came up with this format for minutes, so you had to transfer your old minutes that you had been taking. They wouldn't accept what you had done before. If the SBM office is going to exist to do that—to make life tougher—then who needs it?
>
> I don't want to make a big issue out of a tiny thing, but the attitude should be different. In a decentralized system, what you should be saying is, "What can I do, schools, to help you out down there?"[63]

Some of the city's best principals have created their own structures for consulting closely with their staff and parents, and have no use for SBM's new prescriptions. One claimed,

> I think we're way ahead of school-based management because we've been able to do it on our own terms—instead of our being dictated to that we must have X and so teachers, and Y parents, and so on.[64]

Second, the union/management mentality is unshaken. School-based management was in fact modeled on the employee quality circles of factory workers. The tired stage play of union and district antagonism continues, as the Boston Teachers Union declines its own members' waiver requests that are essential for councils to realize their modest plans.

Third, the constituency mentality is granted further license. The objective remains to accommodate the interests of all parties, and the politics of bargaining interest groups have been relocated from Court Street to each and every school site.[65]

The movement to empower teachers and elevate their status is admirable—and, in the abstract, consistent with research on effective schools. As John Chubb and Terry Moe point out, the attributes of good schools cannot be regulated into existence through the new and onerous mechanisms of SBM:

> Proponents [of such schemes] have tried to "make" teachers more powerful by relying on new bureaucratic arrangements that specify precisely who gets to do what and how they have to go about doing it. This whole approach to empowerment is a gross distortion of the kind of shared influence that prevails within effective schools, where teachers are powerful not because rules and regulations dictate that they must be, but because they naturally come to be influential participants in decision making when schools are founded on teams, informal cooperation, collegiality, and mutual respect. The qualities of effective organization that naturally bring power to teachers cannot be imposed by bureaucratic fiat. They have to develop on their own, freely and informally. Trying to make teachers powerful through bureaucracy is the best way to guarantee that they can never achieve the kind of professionalism they really want and that good schools require.[66]

SBM is unlikely to tackle the largest problems underlying the schools' ineffectiveness. District organization, funding, working conditions, and teacher recruitment and termination procedures will all remain the province of collective bargaining. Schools will have minimal control over their budgets, because most funds will continue to flow to state- and district-mandated programs. Many principals are skeptical that the schools will have the authority they need. As one said,

> I don't think the school system will ever do things like give the SBM schools their own budget money. That's never going to happen. I don't know if the unions are ever going to let a group of professional teachers and administrators in a school screen and decide who will work in their school. That's a key issue. For instance, you have school-based management, then the teachers get bumped or moved and the collective group that you had working really well—you have to start all over again because the same teachers are no longer in that school.[67]

Other principals, he said, have not joined the program because they perceive that SBM does little to shift control to the school site. Instead it simply mandates a particular redistribution of authority within the school:

> They're saying, Why should I have school-based management? Nothing will change except that "I'm giving some empowerment to the teachers." But the schools clearly don't make a difference here anyway. Can we change our school hours? Can we change the model of our school? Can we work within our own budget? Can we decide who'll be in the school and who's out of the school? Wouldn't *that* be decentralized? Well, hell, Court Street hasn't done it yet! What makes you think they're really going to do it?[68]

Prevented from grappling with these questions, school councils will often undertake to resolve small aggravations, which, while briefly boosting faculty morale, have nothing to do with the school's academic goals.[69] Further, even council members' sense of "empowerment" may be fleeting, as they encounter the limitations of the council process, the inflexibility of external rules, and the conflict of interest with their own union protections.

Susan Moore Johnson's recent comprehensive study of teachers' attitudes toward their work found that teachers often perceive site committee work to be humiliating. Much effort is expended to develop recommendations that are then ignored. The councils frequently fail because the lack of consensus on substantive matters leads to cynicism and withdrawal.[70]

How curious it is that educators are enamored with committees; along with their constant companion, the consensus process, committees are notoriously inefficient and inimical to radical change. Businesses rarely assign anything important to committees, fearing they will design the proverbial camel. Corporations place stock in individuals to make decisions, take initiative, and involve others as required. The board of directors of a corporation is a committee, but its members recognize that their role is strictly to set broad policy and hire or fire the chief executive officer. The trustees of a nonprofit organization are as careful not to meddle with their executive director's leadership. School-based management lacks this clarity, and Boston's best principals struggle with its confusion about their role:

> I constantly raise as a concern with the team the distinction between day-to-day operations and policy, the big picture. . . . So I'm saying to the council, we should be talking about recruitment, we should be talking about the organizational structure—not even talking about staff evaluation. At which point I'll have to remind people: supervision and evaluation is my domain—they're not even up for discussion as far as I'm concerned. We should be talking about broad organizational issues.[71]

Teachers also criticize SBM for further eroding accountability: "I think the principal or the headmaster still needs ultimate control, because he or she is going to be the one who's going to bear the brunt of what works and what doesn't."[72]

SBM/SDM, by contrast, insists on absolute consensus at every step. Roving SBM trainers instruct council members in "new attitudes." The trainers even frown on simple majority decisions.[73] Yet consensus is unlikely to yield bold initiatives. Consider the composition of the council and its faculty members. A principal in Boston cannot build his own team; teachers are assigned to the school, not recruited. If a principal does manage to assemble a harmonious staff with a common vision, it is always in jeopardy. Key teachers can be plucked away at any time by the "bumping" provision of seniority. Because council members often have little in common except some shared experience with the school, they will only by coincidence adhere to the same vision. The RAND report concurred: "Because existing zoned schools are diverse and fragmented by design, strong agreements on principle are unlikely to emerge within them."[74]

Substantive proposals will be highly controversial—and quickly rejected. The council process will only be efficient at uncovering the members' lowest common denominator. In corporations, employee committees often breed alienation from "management" and license staff to complain, while failing to take account of the organization's goals and imperatives. Not surprisingly, in Boston and elsewhere, SBM often gets bogged down by discussions of working conditions. Councils also include transient parent members. As Lieberman has asked, are policies to be revised as often as parents come and go?[75]

Proponents of SBM/SDM, like Jerome Rosow and Robert Zager, are usually steeped in the ways of very large companies.[76] There, the goal of "employee quality circles" is to enhance blue-collar productivity through increased worker participation. The incremental improvements achieved by these American manufacturing tactics are a far cry from the fundamental changes needed in urban schools. By contrast, an effective scheme for governing a district's schools would encourage and nurture diverse proposals throughout the system. It would then challenge those making the proposals to attract others to their vision and prove its merit. The authors of the RAND report, Hill et al., reached the same conclusion. Effective schools "are best developed from the ground up, around a small core of committed individuals, not by superimposing procedural templates on existing zoned schools."[77]

Companies are launched by executives who *seek out* others with complementary skills and compatible personalities. Usually they share a foundation of mutual respect and trust, a history of collaboration, a common vision for success, and a willingness to defer to a strong leader within the team. Imagine applying SBM to starting a business.

Executives would be *assigned* to work together. Could we then demand that they beat the competition?

SBM denies the role of individual leadership. With emasculated principals restrained from leading and recast as "facilitators, not leaders"[78] to the council, the schools lack what any organization undertaking change requires—charismatic, individual leadership. As Gutmann writes of SBM in New York,

> One problem . . . that SBM leaves untouched, or makes worse, is that principals have far too little power to exercise effective leadership. . . . New York's is a system that encourages principals to think of themselves as administrators, rather than leaders—with deadly results to schools' effectiveness. It also makes it difficult for schools to create consensus—to bring together principals and teachers who agree on basic educational methods and goals. . . . Research has shown that only when principals are allowed to act as leaders, gathering together like-minded teachers and supportive parents, do schools flourish.[79]

The union ethos censures individual initiative, continuously equating one teacher with every other teacher. But some Boston teachers see the need for cultural change:

> The school has not taken pride in the accomplishments of individuals. . . . I'd like to see people get invested. Some people are out front. Some take that extra step. And that's not denigrating to the people that don't. . . . If the team works together and they contribute to what that person is doing, and they share in it, then they also share in the good feelings that come with recognition. Enough of that is not going on yet. It needs to happen.[80]

SBM neglects the fact that professionals *want* someone, in whom they have confidence, to lead their organization and administer its policies. According to Rosow and Zager, even those teachers who would like a voice in formulating policy have no desire to spend their day making and implementing decisions.[81] Johnson's survey also found that teachers sought to influence policy rather than take responsibility for day-to-day execution. Their interest was in pedagogy, curriculum, and helping each other teach, not budget, resources, or liaison with the district office.[82] As one Boston principal explained,

> The problem comes on a day-to-day basis with a committee of 13. I think it's impractical. There are many decisions that I make in a split second. I don't want to have to stop and wait until the end of the day or whenever we're going to meet with 13 people to decide that this is the thing to do. . . . I wouldn't have a problem with changing policy with 13 people—that's fine. But day-to-day decisions—I just can't see it.[83]

Strong leadership requires taking risks, but school-based management induces participation by *minimizing* participants' risks at every stage.[84] An effective plan for change would instead compensate the champions of change with the rewards of prestige, accomplishment, and authority. In many cases, SBM is simply superfluous. When Boston's best principals adopt SBM, they adapt their existing consultative processes to the SBM model, and use their leadership skills to run effective meetings and make the council productive:

> There are SBM teams in other schools where they spend a lot of time on trivia. One principal said to me, "Geez, we started our meeting at six last night, and honest to God, I didn't get home until eleven." And I thought, if people have to be subjected to that, they are going to drop out. At my school, our meetings are one hour. . . . We focus on the major issues. There are lots of other forums in the BPS. Every school has a parent council. Every school has a faculty senate. So if any issue comes up like "why don't we have more fire drills," I would consider that to be too trivial to bring to the SBM council. This is *prime time*. We want to use it on the big issues, the issues that are really going to move the school forward. So that's what has kept our meetings very clean, very on target, and moving toward major goals.[85]

It is clear that this principal's success with the council would not be possible without her leadership skills and her vision of the council's purpose. In the end, SBM schools with good principals may get still better, and SBM schools with poor principals, as in other districts, will probably only get worse. As the same principal observed,

> I'm told that SBM is a monumental disaster in the whole system. Wherever I go people say, "Oh, SBM, what a disaster!" "Oh, SBM, what a fiasco!" And I just kind of raise my eyebrows and say, "Well, I don't know what you call it at my school, but it's really helping the children."[86]

Collective bargaining has relied on compromise. Both "sides," labor and management, frame their interests as antagonistic as a matter of course, even when they are in fact shared. Both parties give up something, and neither is fully satisfied. Consensus, as mandated by school-based management, takes longer than bargaining; but it still results, all too often, in decisions that reflect the lowest common denominator. The next chapter argues that *subscription*, governance through shared beliefs and educational assumptions, is the hallmark of the best schools. It can and must be at the heart of the successful transformation of Boston's public schools.

CHAPTER THREE

Subscription and Community in Schools

WHAT do good schools have in common? The question of "effective schools" has provoked an entire academic literature. Some experts claim the secret is involved parents, while others stress generous funding. Traditional educators claim good schools share a back-to-basics curriculum, while progressive educators urge elective coursework relevant to students' lives. Most recently, a California task force commissioned by the state legislature linked academic success with self-esteem and recommended that all schools include the promotion of self-esteem in their curricula.

If we take these seductive assertions to be prescriptions, then once again we attempt to impose a formula on schools—with predictably poor results. In the last wave of reform, we falsely concluded that the strength of successful schools like Cathedral High School in Boston, where 87 percent of the mostly low-income, minority graduates go on to higher education, is their back-to-basics pedagogy. We sought to impose their old-fashioned rigor on every school.

But to appreciate the diversity of the best schools' beliefs and traditions one has only to visit a Waldorf school, following the anthroposophical teachings of Rudolf Steiner; an inner-city Catholic parochial school, committed to the notion that every student can master basic skills; and a Phillips Academy, sustained by its passion for inquiry and excellence.

Abigail Thernstrom, in her study of school choice, downplays the importance of diverse educational offerings and submits that all good schools share high expectations of students and sound educational practices.[1] But even she emphasizes that the staff and students of effective schools consider their own schools special: "A school that is felt to be special by those who work and learn in it," she writes, "may be much the same as every other school, but will have the distinction of being *theirs*."[2] Indeed, the strength of such schools is not their pedagogy, but the degree to which parents, students, and teachers *subscribe* to that pedagogy and to the school's culture generally. One cannot mandate this commitment; it must be given by choice. When we forced teachers of every educational persuasion to teach a rigid, back-to-basics curriculum, things just got worse—and this should have come as no surprise.

The best schools, like the best companies, have fewer similarities than differences. Good teaching, after all, cannot be codified. What all successful organizations do share is a high level of commitment or *subscription*, often passionate, from their providers and customers. Studies have repeatedly shown that effective schools share the characteristics of participant ownership, freedom from external constraints, and a strong and distinctive culture.[3] To improve educational outcomes, providers and clients must be secured by choice, not assignment. If we search for a master design for such commitment, we search in vain. One principal explained the strength of subscription this way:

> My ideal would be students who really *want* to be at that school—and who are willing, as much as teachers are . . . to put in the effort to learn the curriculum. . . . And the school would have an environment where they'd feel welcome: It's *their* school. And staff would feel that it's their school. And the parents would feel welcome—not that they were intruding. That the staff working here have high expectations of the students, that they *can* achieve, not that this is all they can do. And also a high expectation of the staff, that they can deliver.[4]

Zoned Schools and Focus Schools

Why do some high schools, whether public, private, or parochial, succeed in educating disadvantaged urban students while others fail? A recent RAND report intensively analyzed three parochial and three special-purpose public high schools in New York City that are effective and compared them with two regular public schools that are not. Their key finding was that effective, or *focus*, schools have crisp, simple missions and organizations capable of making and carrying out decisions. Because focus schools do not hesitate to shape students' attitudes and values, they "persuade their charges to follow rules and achieve academically."[5] By contrast, regular, or *zoned*, public schools implement an array of diffuse programs rather than pursue an overarching mission.[6] A teacher at a Boston school for special needs children explained,

> I think it's really important: if a school's going to work, there has to be some kind of connection between the teachers and the administrators. People have to share the same philosophy. If they don't, then nothing's ever going to get accomplished anywhere in the school.[7]

Zoned schools are run as "franchises" regulated by central bureaucracies. Because they fail to lead their students, they also largely fail to inspire, teach, or discipline them. The superior results of many parochial and magnet programs in educating disadvantaged students cannot be attributed to selective admissions. Rather, so successful are the schools at influencing students' attitudes, views and conduct, that most students eventually fit in.[8] The RAND report contrasts the operation of focus and zoned schools:

> Zoned schools are . . . formal institutions administering programs of benefits and entitlements, while focus schools are informal, self-contained institutions applying general values and priorities in the service of students. Zoned schools have many competing philosophies, rather than one clear overarching one. Catholic and special purpose public schools have clear and definite philosophies, but enjoy great flexibility in deciding on how to apply these philosophies to particular students.[9]

The focus school's mission statement is not merely a declaration of intent or even a widely held agreement on the tone of relations between students and faculty. Rather, it is a social contract, clearly understood by staff and students, that sets forth how all school participants will behave in order to achieve the school's goals.[10] Priorities are set and problems solved based on the mission statement's premises. Activities that advance the mission are celebrated, while others are neglected.[11] In the taxonomy of corporations offered in Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence*, focus schools are "tight-loose" organizations: Each school requires tight adherence to its mission, yet is flexible in how the mission is to be advanced.[12] The schools offer to help both staff and students understand and adjust to the contract, but not to renegotiate its fundamental terms. As the RAND report states, "Most students flout the contract at some time, but they find the consequences adverse, swift, and sure."[13] Boston's best schools have this characteristic. As one special education teacher explained,

> I have a lot of freedom. I think that my ideas are listened to. I think I have a say in what's going on. I'm also given the right—or the opportunity—to do what I want to do without somebody *telling* me what I have to do every single second of the day. This has been very good for me.[14]

Contrary to common assumption, focus schools need be neither distinctive nor innovative. Their pedagogy may be commonplace, their curriculum routine. Yet in all cases, "in the minds of their staff, students, and parents . . . each has a special identity that inspires a sense of loyalty and common commitment."[15] The principals of public focus schools struggle to hire and retain strong, compatible teachers.

Kim Marshall, the enterprising principal of Boston's Mather School, remembers when he first took on the job of turning around the failing institution:

> There are 75 people working in this school. For the first three years that I was here, I kept saying there were only a few people in this school—we're talking about three or four—who are having this inordinate effect on the climate of the building. And I dreamed of being able to get rid of those people, or change them, or something.[16]

And for Marshall, recruiting like-minded faculty is as important as dismissing those who detract from the school's mission:

> I would love to have hiring freedom . . . and seriously recruit for my teachers. There are people who would kill to get into this building right now, but there are no vacancies. . . . Everyone wants to stay here. So I'd love to get some people who are more with me and move out some people who are not.[17]

Another highly regarded principal emphasizes how valuable it would be to select her own faculty. She knows how the school has suffered when assigned teachers who thoroughly disagreed with the school's philosophy:

> The BPS personnel department works with the union. What I don't like is that I can't tell them what it is that's different about the ______ School. I tell them what position is available and they post it. It will go to somebody—through the union naturally. But they should allow us to choose the person who would feel most comfortable in this setting, who agrees to be here, and who really *wants* to be here. Then you'll see the joy and creativity that should be in teaching.[18]

Focus school principals resort to artfully bending the rules and taking extreme actions, like recruiting staff through the ranks of substitute teachers, elaborately manipulating the systemwide staff assignment process, or camping out at the personnel office. One Boston principal seemed to have mastered the intricacies of hiring procedures. In two recent situations she wanted to hire people who had previously taught at the school, had fit in well with the faculty, and were liked by parents and children. The first instance involved the establishment of a new position for a "para-field coordinator" of a program funded by the state's Chapter 636 program for multicultural education:

> I wasn't sure what I was going to call the position. I wanted to list it as a paraprofessional. However, there were paraprofessionals in the system and it was a question as to whether or not there were some who had not been placed. I was told that when I created this position I might not necessarily be able to bring in the person that I wanted. I might get assigned someone from the pool. At which point I changed the position to Community Field Coordinator thinking that I'd have a little more flexibility. . .

> And to be honest, I had someone in mind. . . . This person came in and she was one of our parents who was trained and actually hired by Curry College to come in and work. She came in and provided services three days a week in the classroom. So, technically, she never worked for the Boston Public Schools, she was paid by Curry. Then the 636 money was cut in half. I wanted to retain a piece of that program and decided to retain that position because she had already trained and she was here. . .
>
> We ended up posting the position, which still hasn't been filled technically. I put her in an acting position which assured me that she would be able to stay here.[19]

The other teacher she was trying to get back into the school had already earned the affection and admiration of staff and students:

> I had a physical education teacher who took a leave of absence. And I had, at that point, a real vacancy—in that there were no permanently appointed physical education teachers in the BPS system without a job. There were a number of provisional physical education teachers without jobs.
>
> When my vacancy became known, and it was after the beginning of the school year, I approached personnel and wanted the right, as a school-based management school, to interview any person for that phys ed position. Now, ideally, it would be nice to be able, even at that point, to go outside the system and advertise the position. But, I said, give me the names of every person who has a provisional contract but not a job for this year so that I can interview them for this position.
>
> But because the system had not fulfilled racial quotas, we were initially told that we would not be able to interview all existing phys ed people, but that we had to interview from a list that included only minority candidates. There had been, in this building before, a person who had worked as a provisional whom the parents very much supported, the teachers supported, the kids loved, and we said that we wanted this person in this position.
>
> The person we wanted is here. But he's not here because of any consideration that was given towards us as a school-based management school. He's here just because we wore down all the people who were responsible.[20]

To protect the school's program and its small but sustaining privileges, the focus school's leadership writes articles to publicize the school, encourages visits by prominent officials, and carefully cultivates political allies in outside agencies who can bring pressure to bear on central administration.[21]

Focus schools shape the values of their charges. As Hill et al. write, "From the fact that students chose to enroll, the school creates a presumption that they are willing to accept the school's goals and rules. It has tried to create a tone of community and of shared enterprise instead of an emphasis on rules dictated from above."[22] In some such schools, students pledge in writing to follow the rules, and older students initiate newcomers to the standards of the school community. As a result, drugs, weapons, and other major safety problems are nearly absent. Significantly, the schools know that many students come from homes where education is not valued, and where disadvantaged parents, far from the campus, cannot easily participate.[23]

As organizations with marked cultures, their staffs are not—indeed, cannot be—the chance aggregations of employees assigned to zoned schools. Their specific identity sets them apart from other schools, inspiring loyalty and shared commitment. One Boston teacher emphasized the difficulty of forming a like-minded team:

> When people ask, "What's your education philosophy?" the answer should be, "I believe in this commitment" and "I believe in this responsibility." It should be "I'm a developmentalist," or "I'm a traditionalist." Nobody seems ready to take a stand. But it's essential.[24]

A middle school principal explained that he "would rather have teachers of all abilities than all different doctrines."[25]

One Boston principal emphasized the importance of collegiality, the hallmark of the focus school:

> We are everything to most of our children. We are nurses, children, mothers, big sisters, social workers. It is a very demanding job. If you don't have the collegiality—like being able to rely on a person when you are really down—you cannot survive. If you have people next to you that will be able to support you, it is better. There are days that I go home and I don't know what I'm going to do tomorrow. But the next day I get up and say, "It is another day, and let me see who I can reach out to and what I can do." It gives me the energy to come back and face it.[26]

Zoned schools, the RAND report contends, are deeply compromised institutions. Their missions are diffuse and defined by regulators. In response to external constraints, staff members develop habits that impair the schools' operation. Teachers believe these bureaucratically controlled schools make poor use of them as professionals. Their unique talents and expertise are rendered irrelevant; they are expected to "comply rather than invent."[27] Zoned schools "show the effects of a long succession of choices and compromises, none of which was intended to produce the kinds of schools now typical of inner cities."[28] This diffuse mission is what one principal described as Boston's "myopic kind of view" that entails "focusing on this, focusing on that," without an overarching sense of purpose.[29]

The absence of a unifying mission in zoned schools leads many staff members to attach their careers—define their sense of purpose, derive moral certitude, and secure their jobs—to an external mandate, such as a federal or state intervention, private foundation program, or court order. Issues that are not dictated by external requirements, the RAND authors found, are resolved through negotiation by competing parties, each of whom invokes some claim founded in law, regulation, contract, or simply the way things have always been done.[30] According to the report,

> Most staff members of zoned schools have become accustomed to seeing each other as members of interest groups to be accommodated, bargained with, or confronted. Students are treated as if they represented the clients of advocacy organizations or litigators. The principals who most want to improve their schools see that they must operate as brokers and conciliators. Rather than address the common needs in the school, they attend to the specific interests of the many groups represented in it.[31]

The emphasis on following procedures and delivering programs creates factions within the organization: No one is responsible for integrating these many programs or for the students' education as a whole.[32] The zoned school comes to see its mission as meeting as many of its students' diverse needs as possible through whatever programs it can manage to put in place. While the principal would prefer the school's programs and courses to spring from some larger scheme, he believes that to simplify the school would be to discriminate against someone. Accordingly, staff members are committed not to shared, overarching goals but to specific units and programs: a health clinic, an African dance class, a computer workshop. Often these activities are funded by outside sources to which the staffers feel responsible.[33]

The school is accountable, then, not to the parents, but to outside forces. Its administrators spend most of their time gathering and reporting statistics to the state's education officials, foundation officers, and the board of education or school committee in order to demonstrate improvement as a result of funded programs. Not only has the principal little power in hiring, as teachers are assigned by the central office, but worse, teachers arrive with a contract forbidding their dismissal. Nonetheless, the principal tries when possible to hire good teachers and to stop the very worst from obtaining tenure. In this effort, he must endure enormous paperwork and a heavy emotional cost, and he frequently fails.[34]

While focus schools do not hesitate to mold the character of their students, zoned schools concern themselves with students' emotional lives and social and ethnic identities. The school's permissive social contract seeks to accommodate the students' wishes, but the RAND team found that "students resented the zoned school's diffidence."[35] As a result of this laxness, expectations of achievement and conduct are minimal. For fear of driving them away or violating their rights, schools hesitate to place demands on students. To maximize reported attendance, administrators are willing to tolerate nearly any behavior that is not excessively disruptive. During class, "students rifle through their purses, comb their hair, sleep, get up and walk around, even leave." Cutting and failing two or more classes is routine.[36]

Boston's teachers and administrators increasingly recognize the failure of the zoned school's accommodation. One of the most popular middle school administrators reflected,

> I watched, over a long period of time, what appeared to be staff who really worked with these kids and appeared to do what they needed—which was to provide a "family" situation for them, socialize with them, and so on. . . . They seemed to have great success with kids in terms of personal friendliness,

> but the interesting thing to me, over my 25 years, was to see that that obviously *wasn't what the kids wanted at all.*
>
> That didn't do a thing for them when they got out into the real world. They may have stayed in school but it didn't encourage them to really learn anything. They didn't gain the skills that they needed when they got out. And basically the first time that they hit a high school teacher who was sort of indifferent to them, their attitude was, "this teacher doesn't like me and therefore I'm not going to stay here" and they quit the class. Well, by the time that they met two or three of these people, they had quit two or three classes, and then they dropped out.[37]

He credits the former principal for turning around the school:

> She came in and showed me that what the kids *really* needed was structure. And they needed a heck of a lot of it. Now, a lot of people regarded her way as being militaristic and very rigid. But it was based on something she would say at the beginning of every assembly, something that colored the entire three years she was here:
>
> After the students had said, "Good Morning, Mrs. ____," she would say, "What is your job?" They would say, "Our job is to be the best students that we can be." And she would say, "What is my job?" "Your job is to be the best principal that you can be."
>
> She wasn't impersonal to the kids, and the kids came to really love her, and respect her, and they were very upset when she left them—but she didn't coddle them. Oh, if a child got into difficulty or there was a family problem, you knew that things got taken care of—if she didn't do it herself. But the expectation of each kid was that they were to be the best they could be. And that meant everything—whether it was filing through the corridors, or performance in academics, or in athletics—the best was expected of them. And that changed the school—turned it right upside down.[38]

Boston's code of discipline, by contrast, mandates permissiveness. One high school headmaster said,

> Even though the system has a code of discipline, there is no bottom line. That is wrong. . . . Kids should realize that the world deals with consequences. And that when they go out of here, nobody gives a damn about them, and if they don't produce they are going to be left behind. They need to know that school

> is serious business, and they also need to know that we, as adults and taxpayers, cannot and should not continue to pay for them to languish. It is just flat out wrong and, unfortunately, kids in this system don't ever get that message because they are allowed to languish. It has been unfair to them because they have been taught for years that doing nothing is okay. That is evil, because of what it has done and is doing to these kids—to their minds, to their work ethic.[39]

Since the interview, this headmaster was threatened at gunpoint by a 15-year-old student whom he suspected of defacing walls with graffiti. The district's code of discipline does not authorize him to expel the student.

Earlier, he had written his school's own code of discipline. The school had a "time-out room" staffed by a discipline administrator. As one teacher explained, this school made clear to its students that if they were sent twice to time-out in one day, they were "giving the school a message that they weren't ready to be in school and to learn that day":

> Then their parents would have to come up the next day. It worked very well because the kids really internalized it. If someone was fooling around and you called on them and said, "Are you going to do what you're supposed to do or do I have to send you to time-out?" The kid would say, "No, don't send me to time-out—I've been there once today." They would monitor themselves. And if someone was fooling around, the other kids would let the teacher know, and let each other know: "You better watch it because you've already been to time-out once today." We had a lot of suspensions at the beginning of the year, until kids understood that, yes, there were consequences. As the year went on, there were less and less problems, and so we didn't even have to worry about it. All you'd have to say was, "Do I have to send you?" and they'd say, "No, no." It was very good.
>
> But then we got a new zone superintendent who was against suspensions, by philosophy. Maybe he had seen it used as a negative and punishing tool. And so word went out that suspension rates had to go down. And then kids went to time-out and nothing happened. It doesn't take kids long to get the message. Kids would cut out of school and nothing happened. So discipline has broken down.[40]

Subscription, Community, and Effective Schools

Why do private, parochial, and special-purpose public schools outperform other public schools? The vivid archetypes of focus and zoned schools direct us to the answer: in the focus schools, parents, staff, and students all subscribe to the school's distinct purpose. Trust and community are formed. Staff members are free to exercise discretion in how they teach and solve problems.

Other research on effective schools underscores these conclusions. James Coleman's seminal research compared public and parochial school performance from the *1980 High School and Beyond* (HSB) survey.[11] A national sample of tenth and twelfth graders, the HSB survey included data on socioeconomic status, academic programs, racial/ethnic group membership, and academic assessments, including six standardized tests. Supplementing the HSB data set, a 1984 survey of teachers and administrators documented the pedagogy, policies, and personnel attitudes of the 500 participating schools. After correcting for socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic differences, students in Catholic and other private schools scored higher than public school students.

Critics charged that Coleman had failed to control adequately for differences in the students' backgrounds. Moreover, they said, the statistics should also be controlled for differences in motivation, talent, or prior academic achievement. In response, Coleman and Hoffer prepared a second study that sought to correct for prior achievement. Again using HSB data, the same sophomores tested in 1980 were retested as seniors in 1982; outcome measures from the second were controlled by performance on the first in order to yield the academic growth attributable to the differences between private and public schools. Coleman once again found that there were "strong positive effects of Catholic-sector schools in reading, vocabulary, mathematics, and writing . . . and weak and statistically insignificant effects in science and civics."[12]

In his most recent essay, Coleman proffers an explanation.[13] He again states that Catholic school students tested first as sophomores and again as seniors show a growth in both verbal and mathematical skills of about one full grade level more than their public school counterparts. This difference cannot be accounted for by the Catholic school's "creaming," or concentration, of the most able students. Coleman then examines the differences in the way the two sectors function educationally. For students with comparable backgrounds, Catholic school students are just 7 percent more likely to have studied biology, chemistry, or physics, but 13 percent more likely to have taken advanced math courses. If school functioning (rather than student selection) is the source of the differential sector performance, then Catholic school students should perform better in math than public school students of comparable backgrounds, but only exhibit marginally superior science skills. This was in fact what the tests showed.[11]

Catholic school students are also more likely to attend and remain in college than comparable public school students. Catholic schools assign more demanding coursework and place more students in a college-bound track. Once in this college track, students take more foreign language courses and more math than college-bound students take in a public school. Dropout rates for Catholic high schools are much lower than in either public or private non-parochial schools, even after statistically controlling for attributes like achievement scores, grades, disciplinary history, and absences. Most significantly, dropout rates remain much lower even after controlling for the students' religiosity.

Strikingly, Coleman found that disadvantaged students (from low-income families and whose parents have little education) especially benefit from Catholic schools. They are less likely to either drop out or score poorly and more likely to attend college than their public school counterparts. Perhaps most interestingly, the same is true for children from families deficient in relationships between children and their parents. The difference between these students' performance and that of their peers with good family relations is much smaller in Catholic schools than in public schools.

The superior achievement of students in Catholic schools' academically demanding environment is unsurprising. What *is* surprising is that these results are not exacted at the price of higher dropout rates or a broader gulf between strong and weak students or between low-income and better-off students. On the contrary, in Catholic schools, both the dropout rate and the gap in performance between children of different backgrounds are greatly reduced.

Thirty years ago, Catholic schools were widely regarded as academically inferior to both public and other private schools. To explain this reversal, and why Catholic schools succeed in placing high demands on students, Coleman highlights the transformation of the public high school in the late 1960s from a standard "Carnegie" curriculum for college-bound students to the current "shopping mall" of electives and lower standards. The decline in the authority of parents over their children was at the heart of this change. Frequent residential moves, the loss of community among adults, the decline of city neighborhoods, and the advent of a commercial youth culture (which undermined parental authority) all contributed to the loss of parental control. In order to attract these students, colleges dramatically relaxed entrance requirements. High schools, in turn, were encouraged to pacify their students with frivolous courses in nonacademic subjects, keyed to the commercial culture, and requiring few analytical skills and little homework.

But unlike the public high schools, Catholic schools did not lose the sense of community. As Coleman writes,

> Although the revolution within the family had occurred in Catholic families just as in non-Catholic ones, it was unable to transform the Catholic school into a shopping-mall high school. The reasons were several: The students were in school by choice, and families were paying, giving parents an additional weapon in the intergenerational conflict. Second, Catholic schools had few financial resources with which to add courses to meet a new demand. Third, Catholic schools, with a voluntary clientele, could define their mission less broadly. Probably of greatest importance, however, was the connection among parents, and between parents and school. This provided support for parents in resisting the youth revolution; it formed an adult community, and provided for each pair of parents what might be called "social capital" to aid in resisting the revolution.[45]

Despite their greater rigidity, Catholic schools continue to post lower dropout rates and achievement gaps because, Coleman contends, the social capital provided by the school community is available to the student:

> The strength of the religious community surrounding the school can have a special importance for the student whose family is weak or broken. That is, the social capital of the community can substitute for that which would ordinarily be provided by the family, and should thus be especially valuable for children from disadvantaged or deficient families, students most at risk of doing badly or dropping out.[46]

In the future, Coleman concludes, viable schools will recognize the need for a strong sense of community and the social capital it bestows. Some will obtain this community by restoring the notion that the school operates under a grant of authority from parents, and exploit the resulting social capital to set high academic expectations for all children, regardless of home circumstances. Other schools will reject the notion of *in loco parentis* and engage students as fully autonomous adults, responsible in every way for their education and their future.

Chubb and Moe's influential book, *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools,* published by the Brookings Institution, also examined public/private sector differences from the HSB data set. Of three independent variables—student ability, school organization, and family background—the most important factor in student achievement was school organization. Effective schools, they concluded, operate as teams, relying on shared goals and staff cooperation rather than bureaucratic rules. High- and low-performance schools are distinguished, their research showed, "more by their leadership, professionalism, and teamwork . . . than by their graduation requirements, or homework and writing assignments."[47] Chubb and Moe further concluded from the data that of the factors they examined, autonomy, the absence of bureaucratic control, had the greatest impact on the overall quality of school organization.[48]

While Coleman's research has centered on Catholic schools, his findings are equally applicable to nonsectarian public schools where religious doctrine is forbidden. A shared religious culture is but one means of creating community. In fact, specifically religious teachings may have very little to do with the successes of parochial schools. At the Archdiocese's Cathedral High School in Boston, only 41 percent of students are Catholics, with eleven other denominations represented.[49]

Skeptics argue that parochial schools admit only easy-to-teach children, leaving less-gifted students to the public schools. In fact, with the exception of children with severe disabilities, which the schools are not equipped to accommodate, parochial schools are *less* selective than urban public schools. Boston, like other large urban public school systems, starts classifying children by ability as early as the first grade; by the middle grades they are divided into as many as seven different "tracks," or ability groups, from which they have little statistical likelihood of escaping.[50] Once so labeled, children in the lower regular education tracks (never mind those referred to special or bilingual education) are assigned "worksheets" instead of literature, "functional" or "consumer" math instead of algebra or trigonometry. At an early age, the schools select which students will be placed on a path to college, and which are destined to a limited future.

In urban Catholic schools, by contrast, all students are expected to learn essentially the same material, although not at the same pace. In high schools, this generally includes four years of English and history, and three of math and science. At Boston's Cathedral High School, graduation requirements include four years of English, three years of math, two years of science (including biology), two years of social studies (including U.S. history), and four years of theology. New York City's Catholic high schools boast that 95 percent of their students graduate on time, and 80 percent go on to higher education. Do selection and self-selection explain their success? If so, as Thernstrom has noted, the success of one New York organization, the Student/Sponsor Partnership, is hard to explain. The partnership enrolls at-risk students from the New York City public schools in Catholic high schools. The student's tuition (about $2,000 a year) is paid by a "sponsor" who also agrees to pay attention to the student—to check in occasionally, help with homework, or take a trip to the movies. Most of the students' families have not sought a better education, all have incomes below the poverty level, and slightly more than half are on welfare.[51] Fewer than one in five students live with both parents. Remarkably, fully 75 percent remain in school and complete the program, and 90 percent of these students go on to college.[52] As the Reverend Vincent Breen, superintendent of education for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens, explains, the notion that selection is routine at Catholic schools is "a completely false statement that's repeated over and over again. Catholic schools are just as open to the needs of the urban child."[53]

In her highly regarded study of the American high school, *The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture,* Sara Lawrence Lightfoot identifies similar characteristics of successful secondary schools: a clear and shared ideology, a sense of community, leadership fitting the culture of the school, clear authority to solve problems, high-quality staff, autonomy for teachers, and staff awareness of imperfections and willingness to search for solutions.[54] In her study of middle schools, *Successful Schools for Young Adolescents,* Joan Lipsitz also emphasizes cultural characteristics in school success, including clarity about the school's mission, clearly articulated and shared goals, strong instructional leadership, a coherent philosophy, a principal with vision who supports his staff, respect for staff members as professionals, a climate of positive attitudes and expectations, high levels of effort by the staff, and encouragement of staff ingenuity.[55] The effective middle schools she studied

> *have achieved unusual clarity about the purposes of intermediate schooling and the students they teach . . .*
>
> The schools make powerful statements, both in word and in practice, about their purposes. There is little disagreement within them and little discrepancy between what they say they are doing and what they actually do. As a result, everyone can articulate what the schools stand for. School staff, parents, students, and community leaders tend to use the same vocabulary in discussing their school. While this achievement is in part the result of the principal's superb community relations skills, it is also a reflection of clarity of purpose.
>
> These are confident schools. Each one stands for something special. . . . Each has a mission and knows what it is, and in each case it is both academic and social. The schools have become confident in part because each had a special purpose at its inception. . . . Unlike most schools, they were established for more than reasons of demographics. In every case, a principal then took hold of the possibility for definition and proclaimed it within the school and throughout the community. Each school became special. People within the schools have reacted by producing beyond anyone's reasonable expecta-

> tions. . . . Made to feel like chosen people, staff and students have banded together in their specialness and achieved accordingly. The sense of definition that comes from the exclusivity felt by each school is important in keeping staff morale high and retaining parent support. Most important, though, is the sense of purpose it gives the young adolescents. It helps bind them to the school. It is incumbent upon adults to articulate something that a school stands for and that students can be defined by and stand with. . . . *Each . . . has or has had a principal with a driving vision who imbues decisions and practices with meaning, placing powerful emphasis on why and how things are done. Decisions are made not just because they are practical, but for reasons of principle.*
>
> *The leaders of these schools are ideologues. They have a vision of what [the] school should be . . .*[56]

The sociologist Emile Durkheim, in his seminal early study, traced suicide rates to the strength of the individual's ties to the social fabric. Suicide is least common when a community is well defined and strong, sustained through legends and ritual. Unmarried persons, for instance, are more likely to kill themselves than comparable married persons, and the larger the family size the lower the suicide rate. Suicide rates decline during wartime and periods of national crisis, when individuals are more involved with external events and fellow citizens. By contrast, the frequency of suicide rises when anomie, the weakening of society's "collective consciousness," prevails.[57]

High dropout rates likewise may be a reflection of anomie in the schools, of the social instability and personal uncertainty that results from a breakdown of values. The external economy, the job market, and the broader social context obviously affect dropout rates in all school sectors. But by countering the isolation and anomie so prevalent among inner-city youths, the strong community and collective consciousness of parochial, private, and special-purpose schools may be responsible, in part, for their much lower dropout rates.

"When an organization has a culture that is widely shared and warmly endorsed by operators and managers alike," James Q. Wilson wrote in his definitive study of bureaucracies, "we say the organization has a sense of *mission*."[58] As in many public bureaucracies with a long history, where the chief executive is constrained by layers of regulations, legal rulings, and political considerations, it is very difficult for Boston's superintendent to shape the culture of the schools and imbue them with a vivid, coherent sense of purpose. No one at Court Street could state what the district's mission was. Some administrators dismissed as naive the notion that a large urban school system such as Boston could have an overarching, shared mission. They bridled when pressed to define Boston's mission and listed, with obvious sarcasm, a number of platitudinous goals. But in the schools staff members expressed resentment at the district's lack of purpose. Some teachers and principals, noting the constant change of leadership and the politicization of central administration, no longer thought a common purpose possible, and hoped instead that each school would abide to a clear purpose. One headmaster said,

> I don't think we, BPS, have a mission. I think that is one of our problems. We tend to roll with the punches, or be very reactionary. . . . I was involved last year in writing, with another headmaster, a reorganization plan for secondary schools. At the same time, the zone superintendent was writing one. To make a long story short, when push came to shove, we found ourselves with two very different cornerstone missions. Both incorporated the other mission somewhere in our larger mission statement, but when it came down to the most significant section of the mission statement, ours were very different. That is the way the system works. We have not defined or rallied around a particular mission or purpose.[59]

One principal said,

> The entire school system definitely needs a focus. Right now, I think its people are going in different directions. It would be nice to ask any administrator or teacher, what are the goals of the Boston public schools? And to have them recite them, to find out that we're all thinking alike. But that's not the case. It's very confusing. And so we are going with individual schools. We, in the schools, want to be able to decide what's best for our students, the constituents, what makes sense, and where we are going.[60]

A specialized curriculum is one way to build a foundation for a strong educational culture, a sense of mission. Mary Anne Raywid cites studies that show dropout and suspension rates in schools of choice regularly fall below district averages.[61] But a school with a commonplace curriculum, if enlivened by a distinct philosophy, can provide the basis for an equally vital school culture and community.

One Boston teacher described her ideal school this way: "I think I would staff it with people whose first question, if I were interviewing them, would not be, 'How much will I be paid?' but, 'How much latitude will you give me to do what I feel necessary for the best interest of the child?' And I would pray, if I were an administrator of that school, that I would never get caught up in a bureaucracy, but would always remember why I started the school and who it really belongs to. You know, it wouldn't belong to me. It would belong to them."[62]

If the properties of subscription and community are the heart of effective urban schools, how can they be realized throughout Boston's public schools? Chapter 4 takes on the question—and proposes a plan.

CHAPTER FOUR

School Entrepreneurship

EDUCATIONAL REFORMERS are tireless in their pursuit of the one best system. Despite a decade of disappointments, they continue to seek a magic formula of funding, governance, curriculum, pedagogy, and staff certification to impose on all schools. Of course, their search is in vain. Successful schools are driven by diverse missions and philosophies. There is no one right way to teach. What the best schools do have in common, as chapter 3 argued, is subscription. Students, parents, and teachers believe in the school's mission, its distinctive purpose and ways. A community is formed. As in any business, professionals do their best in an environment of trust and commitment. If a community of educationally like-minded, committed professionals is the hallmark of effective schools, the question remains, how can that community be fostered?

Forging distinctive schools will require inspired individuals—charismatic leaders who articulate a plan and inspire others to realize it. In the inner-city neighborhoods of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, there are a handful of exceptional schools whose results—in student achievement levels, attendance, and dropout rates—defy their surroundings. Behind each is the story of a determined individual willing to work against the odds because he believes his way is the right way. Standing out in a climate of resignation, minimal expectations, and rule following, they are *school entrepreneurs.*

Extraordinary individuals are scattered throughout the schools. Many teachers know how to raise standards of teaching and learning and improve students' self-esteem. Yet they hesitate to come forward, to act on this knowledge.[1] Boston and other large districts must call on them to establish schools of their own design and join with others who share their convictions, gained in the classroom, about their kids and how best to teach them.

In any large organization as bureaucratized as the Boston public schools, only charismatic leadership can galvanize people to break with the established order. "Charisma" is meant here in the sociological sense defined by Max Weber, "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and endowed with . . . exceptional powers or qualities."[2] Such an individual, as Anthony Giddens has written, taps a "driving, creative force" and rejects established rules and the baggage of the past.[3]

The person with the leadership talents, the credibility, and the perseverance to triumph over the formidable institutional and cultural impediments of the largest city school systems is rare indeed. There are inspiring success stories in urban schools, in which a superintendent has been credited with making the schools function again at some basic level. But these will likely remain isolated instances as long as the obstacles are so daunting. The leadership required to turn a single school around is easier to find. Weber recognized that leaders differ greatly in their charismatic gifts. The ability to exercise leadership is a talent like any other and is found in varying degrees.[4] The principals of celebrated schools in our most embattled city neighborhoods are obviously not endowed with capacities on the scale Weber had in mind, yet they succeed. To carry out their task, school entrepreneurs must be visionaries, mavericks, and risk takers.

Unfortunately, only a few principals in Boston fit this description; most are mediocre and lack energy and daring. This is not an accident. The job has for too long rewarded those who follow the rules and maintain the status quo. Our principals are not risk takers. They lack vision. They cannot be expected to transform the schools. A plan for the schools must therefore extend an invitation for school entrepreneurs to step forward from the ranks of Boston's teachers, as well as business people and others outside the schools, and put them in charge. Each such leader will identify the specific ideals for which his school stands and establish the best means to achieve them. Only a forceful, individual leader or founding team can forge such a statement; committees can produce only platitudes and vague recommendations.[5]

One middle school was the least popular in its zone when a new principal arrived in 1990.[6] Another principal underscored the new principal's leadership qualities:

> The proof of the pudding is the ____ School, which was at the bottom of the heap—and is now doing much better. And the word is getting out that this is the place to go.
>
> Why? The key person is the principal. She goes in, just does not put up with all the nonsense that's gone before and says, "This is the way it's going to be."
>
> The classic tale: Kids would pull the fire alarm. They found out who it was and the principal called up the kid's mother and said, "Now you owe us $500 and your child will be home for three days. If you don't pay us the $500 for the false alarm, we'll take you to court." Later she called up the parents again and said, "Your kid is here. We are going to have a hearing; do you want to come down?" and the mother said, "No, I understand what it is, and I don't have the $500." And the principal said, "Well, we'll see about that." And she pursued it. She took the woman to court and got the $500. The judge awarded it. And that's the last fire alarm you're going to see in that building.
>
> There's the point: She took the bull by the horns. She's a very competent woman. And that doesn't mean she's unfeeling, but that this kid did something wrong.
>
> Not that she was being mean or vindictive. Everybody understood: *This isn't going to happen in my school.* The principal has to have that kind of role, and the teachers have to be involved in the process because the principal can't do it alone—you have to have other people on board. But that charismatic leadership, or whatever you want to call it, is very important.[7]

School Entrepreneurship

Another such school entrepreneur is Madeline Cartwright, principal of North Philadelphia's James G. Blaine Public School.[8] Two-thirds of her elementary students receive public assistance. Some live in abandoned buildings around the school, without running water, electricity, or an address, because their parents do not have enough money left over from their welfare check to pay rent on an apartment. Many of her students' parents and relatives are crack addicts. Violent death, witnessed firsthand—from drugs, guns, suicide, and domestic violence—is a commonplace to her children; they describe it quite matter-of-factly.

Set among trash-covered abandoned blocks in one of the most desperately poor neighborhoods in the city, Cartwright's school stands not only as a safe haven but as a place where children can learn. On arriving at the school, Cartwright believed the first step was to give her students refuge from the filth and despair of the streets in a clean, freshly painted classroom. She organized a raffle to buy a washing machine and dryer for her office. Each morning, Cartwright takes the clothes from her dirtiest children, and returns them clean at day's end. She has been known to venture into the homes of her children, to wash piles of dishes or even unplug a stopped toilet, bringing a little order into their chaotic lives.

Cartwright is not merely an administrator but a leader, an inspiration to a community rife with violence and short on hope. "The sky is the limit," she tells students and parents, because she came from the same poverty as they. Her new car is parked in front of the school, untouched. Between laundry cycles she explains that "nobody apologizes for me being raggedy when I was a little kid, so I don't apologize for my Cadillac."

Cartwright took to answering the school phone herself, so that teachers calling in sick would have to tell her directly. At first, teachers would hang up and call back—only to reach her again each time: "Good morning, this is Mrs. Cartwright. If you're going to take off today, you have to talk to me." She explains how a teacher broke her leg and wanted six weeks off:

> I said to her, "I'll come and get you and I'll put you in a wheelchair and I'll roll you to class." I said, "You can write halfway up the blackboard. Guys came

> back from Vietnam who didn't have any legs and they worked every day. Same as teachers. You've got just *one* broken leg and you want to stay home?" When I rolled that lady down that hall in a wheelchair, the word went through the school that the new principal's *crazy*. Best thing I ever did.

A story in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported on her first parents' meeting. "The parents were spellbound and the teachers were dumbfounded by the size of the crowd, the first sign that things were changing."[9] The school, its walls now freshly painted and its waxed floors gleaming, was black with filth when Cartwright first arrived. She recounted what she told parents at the meeting:

> "This place is dirty! How can your kids go to school in a place like this?" One of the parents said, "You must think you're in the suburbs." She *expected* the neighborhood to be dirty. I said to her, "The dirt in the suburbs is the same dirt that's in North Philadelphia—if you don't *move* it! And the same detergents work here. We're going to clean this building this summer. Raise your hands if I can depend on you. Keep your hands up! Somebody get their names!"

Under Cartwright's leadership, the school's attendance level rose dramatically, to 92 percent. The school academically outperforms other inner-city schools. This could not have happened without Cartwright's enterprising, innovative approach to education.

Unfortunately, many concerned with the troubled public schools instinctively recoil from the term "entrepreneur." The word conjures up a host of unfavorable images: money making, the profit motive, disreputable activities, and, of course, greed. The schools of education are in part responsible for these perceptions among teachers. Many education students have never worked in business, had responsibility for meeting a payroll, turning around an organization, or hiring a capable staff. Rather than temper their collegiate hostility toward enterprise, some education professors cultivate their students' antipathy to business. In some classes, "excellence," "competition," "standards," and even "achievement" are now all bad things.[10] All are denounced as a threat to "equity." In this setting, special contempt is reserved for entrepreneurs, the individuals who have thrown off facile alienation from the "system" and instead have chosen to excel within it. Yet these are the creative leaders who, in a few short decades, have invented whole new industries like biotechnology and computers, the future employers of thousands, and the best hope for reversing the country's economic decline. This prevailing ethos and the paranoia about business "taking over" education are destructive. Educators have much to learn from business people and vice versa.

Misconceptions of entrepreneurship must be overcome if the public sector, and especially the schools, is to replace bureaucratic with entrepreneurial management. Silicon Valley start-ups and condominium developments may be the most visible examples of entrepreneurship, but they are not the most common. High-profile business successes and rags-to-riches tales, popular with the media, further the misconception that entrepreneurship necessarily involves high risk and high technology. Such stereotypes make it hard for many to understand how entrepreneurship can further the aims of public institutions.

Peter Drucker, an authority on entrepreneurship, maintains that it is not exclusively an economic phenomenon. Entrepreneurship, he proposes, is a form of management that strives for systematic innovation. The entrepreneur "searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity"; this mind set is invaluable to any organization with clear goals.[11] Making money need not be one of them.

Entrepreneurship is a way of making organizational choices: perceiving change as an opportunity for advancement, not as a threat to the status quo. Successful businesses—large or small, new or enduring—recognize that their products and services must change in a changing world. Modern urban life similarly challenges the current system of public schooling. Recalcitrant students, demoralized teachers, intractable social problems, and diminishing budgets demand an entrepreneurial approach.

Entrepreneurs are also said to take high-risk gambles for high-yield returns. If the price of failure is a year in a child's education, can we afford to take such risks? In truth, however, entrepreneurs perceive systematic innovation as less risky than making incremental changes; for them, Drucker writes, "defending yesterday . . . is far more risky than making tomorrow."[12] Thus, in education, funnelling new money into unsuccessful or outmoded practices may be *less* cautious than fundamentally reexamining needs, resources, and outcomes. Boston's twenty-year investment in forced racial balance, which has brought about no improvement in educational opportunity, is such an instance.

Madeline Cartwright is a school entrepreneur, not because she plans to make money or take big risks, but because she leads rather than manages. While other principals become expert rule followers, Cartwright has the rare gift of being able to think beyond the way things have always been done, to imagine alternatives, and to act unhesitatingly to get them done. Who else would have thought to put a washing machine in her office? Entrepreneurship is the imagination to see how things could be done differently, the confidence to withstand skepticism, and the energy to persevere.

The Entrepreneurial Culture

Many who are fortunate enough to work in an entrepreneurial organization, or who prize the memories of their best years in a start-up company, find textbook descriptions of entrepreneurship sadly flat. Perhaps this is because the nonrational and emotional are not appropriate subjects for business writing. But the energy of such an organization derives from its culture, the relationship of its people to their work and to each other. Entrepreneurial leaders do not manage day-to-day tasks; they inspire staff members to a common goal that might seem impossible to others. A sense of adventure, of possibility, and of optimism animates the workplace. Entrepreneurs take great care in selecting each new team member, not only to see if he has the necessary skills, but to see if he "fits in" and wants to "sign up." A great number of candidates may be interviewed for just one position. A finalist may be asked to come back again and again until everyone is satisfied that he is right for the organization. Employees often take to working very long hours, even well into the night—not because they are told to, but because their goals require it. The excitement about the project and the determination to succeed are palpable and infuse everyone and every activity. Because the staff members are personally compatible, trust develops between them. The work becomes all-absorbing, and the success of the project is pursued with an almost religious fervor. Very few members complain; those who are alienated from the culture eventually leave. Staff may be well paid, but salaries and benefits do not hold them there.

Start-ups are particularistic organizations. There is no attempt to be everything to everyone. This is not thought to be inequitable, because staff members perceive that there are other organizations that offer the right cultures for others. These competitor organizations may be mocked for their foreign ways—their products, conventions, and dress codes—but they are also respected. Employees take pride in being different from the competition, and small traditions celebrate these differences.

In the traditional corporation, new employees are told to do something one way, because that is the way it has always been done. In the start-up, there is no history. The expectation is that one will invent as one goes along. Decision making is consultative but not dependent on consensus. Risk taking is acceptable; people are encouraged to be daring and allowed to make mistakes. The power of ideas is valued, so time is taken to brainstorm and sound out decisions. But entrepreneurs are also action oriented. When all perspectives have been heard, despite imperfect information, entrepreneurial managers welcome making decisions. Getting up to bat is as important as one's batting average. People rarely procrastinate by saying, "Let's think about it," or refer a question to a committee. If they do, it is an ad hoc one that meets, decides, and disbands. People at all levels of the organization feel free to throw out ideas that might be crazy—or, occasionally, brilliant—without fearing ridicule.

What some would call pride in the start-up culture, others would call elitism or even arrogance. There is a sense that "we can do this better than the competition," which is energizing. Mediocrity is anathema. Every task, no matter how small, is worth doing not just adequately but to the highest standard.

This approach, when applied to education, stands in marked contrast to—and often in conflict with—the goals of the bureaucracy. Consider the experience of East Harlem's District 4. When Anthony Alvarado became superintendent, the district was among the worst in the city. The administration decided that it was time to take risks. Alvarado, along with deputy superintendent Sy Fliegel, urged teachers and administrators to come forward with plans for their own schools. They encouraged staff members to develop "innovative programs based on interests, talents, [and] philosophical beliefs," recalls Fliegel. "By giving them the opportunity to realize their dreams," he says, "a district can succeed in maximizing the potential of both staff and students. Ownership is established when students and parents are given a choice in selecting a school that is geared to their interests and abilities."[13] At first, staff were unbelieving, as Fliegel recounts:

> Despite the diversity of personalities and philosophies of the teachers who presented ideas and plans for new programs, their reactions, when given the final okay, were always the same. They were shocked or surprised and usually asked, "Do you really mean it?" Their expectation of the system was that even when people express admiration and support for the new program, the establishment would always find a reason for not being able to do it at this time.[14]

The schools all began small, often with just a few classrooms of one grade. Effective schools were expanded and duplicated, and in 1991 there were twenty-four new schools in the district.[15]

Despite the success of District 4, including the schools' dramatic rise in standardized test scores, Alvarado's successor, Carlos Medina, was suspended by New York's chancellor on the grounds that he had mismanaged the district. Medina concedes that he violated the central office's "standard operating procedures," but says he could not operate effective schools without breaking the district's rules. He and Alvarado admit that they protected the alternative schools, making them accountable for results rather than for complying with stated procedures. As Deborah Meier, the nationally recognized principal of a District 4 high school, explained to *Education Week,*

> They never asked us what we were planning to do. We were told that "if it makes sense and you're willing to be held responsible for it, just do it." . . . Each of our schools is based on a different idea, which means we need a district office that thinks of our unique needs and goes the extra mile for us.[16]

Entrepreneurial Schools in Boston

A few entrepreneurial principals in Boston are defying the district's bureaucratic culture. By understanding who they are and what they have done, we can learn how to encourage others like them to come forward. Three examples of school entrepreneurship in Boston follow —one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. They are, of course, not the only entrepreneurial programs in the district.

Kim Marshall and the Mather School

In 1639, a one-room schoolhouse opened its doors to the first elementary school students in what would later become the United States of America. But in 1987, the Mather School was in a very sorry state. Set atop Meeting House Hill in Dorchester on an asphalt lot strewn with broken glass, the gloomy, deteriorating red brick building housed a school whose graduates—mostly minority children—were near the bottom of Boston's curve of academic achievement. Parental participation was almost nonexistent.

M. Kim Marshall, the school's determined new principal, was a product of Harvard University.[17] Marshall had taken a curriculum planning job at Court Street, ready to battle the problems of urban schools from the system's command center. But despite what he perceived to be the good intentions of then-superintendent Bud Spillane, Marshall soon came to feel that he could only be effective on the front lines.

Marshall's arrival at Mather brought large and small innovations instantly: daily staff memos, student attendance incentives including free pizza, and the introduction of a cutting-edge learning program called Reading Recovery. There were ad hoc curriculum committees for staff; an aggressive fundraising campaign aimed at corporate, government, and community sources; and birthday pencils engraved with the school's name and hand-delivered to students by the principal.

The fundraising drive, built around the school's 350th anniversary, was so successful that the Mather School soon sported new windows, a freshly sanded auditorium floor, a new playground, and a bus for school field trips and off-site physical education. By 1989, the Mather School was even showing signs of school spirit. "What I had was an extraordinary opportunity," Marshall recalled in an interview in his office. "We had this 350th anniversary . . . I was able to mobilize the staff, the parents, the community and political figures in an incredible cast of characters to get the building fixed. . . . The building has been totally transformed. And the learning environment and the statement that it makes to the kids and staff. . . " As the principal's words trailed off into a gesture resembling a blessing, the pleasure his accomplishments afforded him was obvious.

The anniversary festivities attracted students, parents, and alumni representing the Mather School's ethnically diverse past and present; the school's new community and corporate sponsors; even national dignitaries. A bonus was a scholarship fund, organized by the president's nephew, Jamie Bush, providing college tuition for an entire fifth grade class. But none of this happened overnight, nor did it happen smoothly. Coming directly from Court Street and armed with two Harvard degrees, Marshall predictably met resistance—particularly from a group of teachers who took offense at his style and goals. "I think I made them absolutely sick," said the principal, leaning back in his wooden chair. "What was this young Harvard idealist doing here?"

Taking his first teaching job in 1969 at the Martin Luther King School in Dorchester, Marshall quickly came to recognize a worthy challenge in the field of public education. Two decades later, he came to his post at Mather determined to realize the vision of his mentor, Harvard educator Ron Edmonds. Edmonds deemed several characteristics essential to successful urban schools: a strong principal, high expectations, a humane environment, frequent testing, and a focus on basic skills.

Marshall works hard to make parents feel welcome at the school, sending weekly memos home with the students. But the best focus for a principal, he believes, is to concentrate on the things he can control, such as educational leadership and the instructional use of test data: "The problem with people who say you can't have an effective school without parental involvement is that they have created an excuse, and I think that it can be a cop-out," he said. "You don't want to get into making excuses about why children can't learn."

In his fight to prove that all children *can* learn, Marshall has used the Reading Recovery program to rescue the worst-performing readers in the first grade. Reading Recovery is based on an intensive, highly focused one-on-one tutoring program. For 12 to 16 weeks, each student spends half an hour a day working with a teacher who has been trained to recognize and address hundreds of reading problems, as specific as a tendency to confuse "p" with "d" or "b."

Reading Recovery's supporters claim that most children who have completed the program never need additional remedial reading; 85 to 90 percent of students tracked as far as the fourth grade are keeping up with students in the middle range of their grade level. Marshall and the zone superintendent, Clifford Janey, brought the program to Mather and now there is a move to spread Reading Recovery to the rest of the system. Now in its second year at Mather, the program's results are striking: all 16 participating first graders were promoted. Eleven are reading at grade level, and three of these are on the honor roll. Only five children are still receiving special education or Chapter 1 services.

Retention in grade and suspension rates are both way down. The most recent standardized achievement test score results, 1990–91, have placed Mather among the top five most improved elementary schools. Marshall is also looking forward to establishing a "state-of-the-art" math program, developed at the University of Chicago, that is being funded by a $20,000 grant from a national foundation.[18]

Marshall believed that a staff sharing a common vision was key to turning the school around, and has labored to build a like-minded community in the school:

> Before 1987, the Mather had a reputation as a troubled school. There was serious vandalism, including arson, out-of-control students, rock-bottom achievement, very low parent participation, and lots of conflict between teachers and the principal. The staff was high on *congeniality*—staff parties, even one reported screening of a risqué movie in the teachers' room—but low on *collegiality*—positive exchanges on students and curriculum.
>
> The building was falling apart. People were into what I call the psychology of feeling like martyrs in a hopeless cause. While a lot of them were working hard to do well, they basically felt that it was hopeless. They were extremely discouraged by the raw deal they were getting from the system and the almost overwhelming problems of the children. Turning these attitudes around, I think, can only be done with a certain amount of conflict. So I went at it from a number of different angles.

One of Marshall's first steps to unify the staff was a daily communication to all employees, the Mather Memo. One day's issue might include tips on curtailing student absenteeism, mention of students' birthdays, and a call to conserve energy by keeping the school doors closed. Early on, Marshall's detractors welcomed him with unsigned parodies of the daily memo. The group also dominated a faculty senate whose main purpose seemed to be to confront the new principal with problems:

> For my first two years, I tried to persuade the faculty senate that its role was to be part of the school's governance—to reach out. They didn't want any part of that, because the group involved was the heavy-duty union, negative, anti-administration thing, and they saw their role as confronting me with problems.
>
> First, they would have a separate meeting without me, which I was not invited to. In fact, I was not *allowed* to attend. They would meet with as many people as they could, and dwell on the negatives, get all frothed up about all the problems of the school. And then a delegation of them would come to meet me and confront me with conditions.

The confrontations were frustrating for Marshall. "I wouldn't know what had happened in the meetings. I wouldn't have been there to defend myself against a lot of stuff that had been going on for six or seven years," he recalled.

> Then I'd get hit with a formal thing that was very confrontational, very tense, and certainly one of the most unpleasant things that happened to me in my first couple of years. I said, "Let's meet *together* for the first time, and let me be there." They said, "Well, there are certain people who won't speak up if you are there."
>
> As conditions in the school improved and there was less to complain about, the faculty senate went through a less active phase. The old group withered away. They were completely dependent on problems to survive. Fewer people attended meetings and when leaders met with me, what they came up with were kids tying up the office phone, parents going up to classrooms without checking with the office first, etc. They still weren't getting to the real guts of running a school—that was "the administration's problem."
>
> Most recently, the faculty senate has become active again, playing a very positive role in solving schoolwide problems. They led the staff to shape a much-improved system for getting the students into the school in the morning and out at dismissal. The faculty senate also formed a group to encourage peer observation.

> This turnaround took four years to happen and reflects a very encouraging shift from dumping problems in the principal's lap to the staff empowering itself to solve problems as a group. I find the peer observation initiative the most exciting development. The faculty senate accomplished what I could not have done alone.

In a system in which firing an overtly hostile staff member is virtually impossible, Marshall's best weapon was to stand his ground. By calling ad hoc meetings to pursue new school projects, he swayed his faculty away from the complainers—and built a team.

In four years there was a 50 percent turnover in the Mather staff. Marshall's sternest critics either retired or tranferred out. The remaining and new staff are willing to work with Marshall and want to see the school succeed. "There are people ready to pounce if I make a stupid mistake, but they are not subverting . . . and a lot of people are right there, working hard for the kids." Marshall's frequent questionnaires do reveal staff dissatisfactions; in one survey, 60 percent of the faculty judged morale to be only "fair" and were quite critical of his ability as a disciplinarian. On the other hand, the same survey elicited a jumble of positive responses to the new Mather programs and curricula.

Approaching the end of his fifth year, Marshall reflects,

> The staff is really coming together as a team. The positives are overcoming the negatives and people are taking more collective responsibility for the running of the school and for what students learn. Before I was trying to do too much —fixing the Xerox machine, doing all the discipline. We've worked out our own sort of free-form shared decision-making model—a strong hand, extended benevolently. I still have the power I need to get things done but there is more initiative coming from teachers and positive peer pressure for improvement. Visitors are struck by the caring and purposefulness of the staff—we get very few parent complaints and there is almost no vandalism. We are one of the most sought-after schools in the choice process.

In 1990 Harvard awarded Marshall a third degree, an honorary doctorate of letters. The ceremony's marshal read, "While others consigned inner-city schools to the graveyard of hope, this man refused to despair. He dared to believe that he could help create a sense of community in a school that would radiate to the streets and the homes beyond. At Mather he seems to be everywhere . . . talking with students and teachers, cheering them, encouraging them, helping them work together in the classroom and beyond. Under his leadership, teachers, students, and parents have discovered more pride and confidence in themselves, and have attracted nationwide admiration."[19]

With his leadership established, and the intensity of his commitment evident in the physical and cultural changes he has wrought at the Mather School, Marshall is where he wants to be—poised to tackle the pedagogical challenge that called him to the front lines of urban education. One anticipates further successes, because Marshall has been trained to think and act like a winner.

However, Kim Marshall has his critics: "I'm seen as a rather hard taskmaster and a rather judgmental person. I don't feel that way, but that's the way I come across to some people."

Bob Martin and the McCormack School

Dorchester-born principal Bob Martin stands in the corridor directing traffic: "Stay to the right!" A surprisingly well-behaved corps of seven hundred students finds its way to classes in the John W. McCormack Middle School, which for two of the last three years has been the highest-scoring middle school in Boston.[20]

Martin is the driving force in his school's remarkable improvements —not only in test scores, but also in physical resources, parent involvement, and student behavior. With a blend of tough love for his students; dogged marketing to parents, staff members, administrators, and corporate partners; and the latest computer technology in the classroom, Martin has in ten years transformed a rowdy, poorly performing school into a controlled choice favorite.

While Martin has a bit of the hard-selling businessman about him, the business at hand is kids, and this principal claims to know each of their names: "See, I'm in and out of every classroom every day, even if just to walk through," he says. "They're used to seeing me so often it's not a surprise anymore . . . I will sit in the back of the room and watch what's going on, and I'll walk from desk to desk."

A product of the Boston school system and a graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Martin brings an insider's insight to his career in public education. As a black child in the years preceding court-ordered desegregation, Martin was sent by his mother across town to the largely white, academically respected Oliver Wendell Holmes School. His mother instructed him and his sister to lie about their address. "We couldn't understand it," says Martin. "It's the only time she ever told us to lie."

Martin began teaching in Boston in 1974, and at 28 became Boston's youngest school principal. In 1981, he took the helm of the McCormack School, whose students scored consistently below their peers on the city's standardized tests. Martin's predecessor had come from an elementary school, had no middle school experience, and had never worked in a school as large as the McCormack. "The school was really in bad shape," Martin explains:

> There was no leadership. There had been 17 false fire alarms in seven months that year. The place was chaotic. So I came in and installed law and order with teachers who were very willing to cooperate. That had to be first in a series of priorities. And then I went about the business of taking a look at the staff and the curriculum. And the McCormack has been on its way up ever since.

Law and order meant a return to a traditional, disciplined school environment. "I said, 'It's going to be controlled and orderly,'" Martin recalls. "Teachers were going to have responsibility for being in specific locations and directing kids. . . . Students were to be told that . . . 'you can talk to whomever is in front of you, or behind you, but under no circumstances will I accept screaming or boisterousness.'"

The law and order philosophy applies to McCormack faculty as well as students. When Martin arrived, one teacher had been selling time-share condominiums on Cape Cod during three of his five scheduled weekly teaching days. "I confronted him early," Martin says. "I can deal with anything except for people exploiting the job at the cost of the kids. Then I'm not nice. I have had to get rid of narrow-minded assistant principals, self-righteous clerks, and incompetent custodians. But my reputation goes before me; people know this is not a place to go into if you think you're going to sit with your feet up."

Despite hiring constraints, Martin is extremely selective in finding teachers to fill vacancies. Not everyone can be a good teacher—especially a good middle school teacher. Some teachers "hang out" in a middle school, hoping for a position at the elementary or high school level. Martin combines compassion for his students' present with a strategic concern for their future: "This is the last time the kids are generally impressionable. . . . If there are values to be reinforced, or cautions to be issued, this is the last time kids are listening very carefully to what you say. Teen pregnancy, alcohol abuse, drug abuse—preventative measures for all of those issues really need to get a foothold in the adolescents' behavior pattern and understanding before the eighth grade."

When Martin interviews potential teachers, this mission is foremost in his mind: "My teachers are very, very high energy people. They like middle school kids," he says. "And when we find people who like middle school kids . . . the positive rapport comes naturally." But it takes more than rapport with children to impress Martin: "It's important to me to attract skilled teachers who have very high academic and behavioral expectations of kids, who are very literate themselves, and who really are looking for ways to improve themselves as well as the school," he says. "I really grill people about their relationship with technology: how computer-literate they are, and how computers connect to instruction." And a McCormack teacher must be ready to join the team. "The allegiance of somebody coming through the door has to be to my administration," says Martin, "as well as to the school and the staff, not to a school committee member, or somebody at the City Council. I've turned any number of people away. I'm sure that career-wise I've suffered for it. But I've been able to maintain the integrity of the faculty by not hiring anyone who is not highly qualified and intelligent."

Bureaucratic and budgetary constraints limit Martin's control over staffing. He cites as obstacles the difficulty of providing positive teacher incentives and the impossibility of firing teachers who don't measure up: "There is no real precedent for being fired for being a bad teacher. If principals had more authority on the school site, they would be able to create more effective schools." Despite these many constraints, Martin feels he has improved the level of teaching at the school. Along with highly skilled teachers, Martin credits the installation of 175 computers for improved student performance.

If Martin is an entrepreneur, then the school's corporate partner, the Bank of Boston, is an investor with long-range hopes. The bank's most dramatic gift has been to fund the Quantum LEAP program, providing $250,000 worth of hardware and software for instructional and managerial computing. "What we're doing is supplementing our curriculum with lots of enrichment strategies and lots of technology, so we're able to reach the kids," Martin says. "Every youngster has a preferred modality: visual learners, kinesthetic learners, audio learners. The technology helps us to create in kids a feeling of success."

Besides reading and math instruction, the computers are used for teacher training and development, programs to build the computer literacy of parents, and an evening program for adult learners. In addition, the Bank of Boston provides the McCormack School with more than 120 volunteer mentors and tutors, a monthly luncheon for students with perfect attendance records, T-shirts, and other incentives to inspire achievement. "Adolescents want to have trophies," Martin notes.

Martin has even ingeniously tapped computer technology to improve attendance and parental involvement. After teachers submit their daily attendance sheets, a staff member enters their ID numbers into a computer. It looks up all the absent children's home telephone numbers, and when the phone answers, plays a taped message in Martin's own voice notifying the parents of their child's absence. Parents are held accountable for their role in the school.

Martin unabashedly encourages McCormack kids to compete. "We have lots and lots of schoolwide contests," he says. "We participate in science fairs, the social studies fair, essay contests, and poetry contests. We are constantly having kids use their writing skills for outside newspaper, supermarket, and radio contests." Martin generously sprinkles his conversation with "bests" and "mosts," underscoring the emphasis on striving and achievement.

While he believes competition stimulates students to try harder, Martin's larger purpose is the creation of school spirit. The culture of competition, Martin feels, leads to a healthy pride in oneself, one's team, and one's school. With a student population that is 39 percent black, 29 percent white, 27 percent Hispanic, 3 percent Asian, and 2 percent Native American, the McCormack culture turns diversity into harmony:

> We want kids to identify as part of a homeroom. With the unity of a homeroom . . . kids don't break down and see themselves as part of just a racial or neighborhood group. White, Hispanic, boy, girl, physically handicapped or able-bodied—they are all part of Room 126. *Rah, rah, rah, 126!* It's a good, solid, healthy way for kids to develop their appreciation for one another, for themselves, and for their community.

Discipline has also improved at the McCormack school: Book vandalism has declined dramatically, and suspensions for behavior problems are comparatively low.

Martin has unabashedly promoted the school's achievements to the outside world, selling the school to parents, administrators, potential teachers, and just about anyone who will pay attention. He cooperated with the Bank of Boston on a public relations plan. The bank hung posters celebrating the partnership in its branches throughout Boston. "The idea was that parents who go into the bank would . . . read about the school and the technology," Martin says. "And the next year, we had the highest number of first-choice applicants for admission to grade six in the city." The trend persists. For 1991–92, the McCormack school attracted two applicants for each opening.

At the McCormack School it is clear that climbing scores represent more than an improvement in students' academic performance. Martin's students are learning the meaning of pride in achievement. "My overall goal was to make the McCormack the best middle school in the system," Martin says. "I have to say, albeit modestly, that I think I've achieved that." But his frustration with the red tape endures:

> The kids are great . . . and they know I feel that way. That's one of the things that makes my job so much easier. . . . This is who I really do this for. . . . The hardest part of my job is to deal with the inflexible bureaucrats downtown.

Larry Myatt and Linda Nathan and the Fenway Middle College High School

What do you do with a high school's most difficult students? Send them to college. That, at least, is the unorthodox approach of Larry Myatt and Linda Nathan, director and assistant director of the Fenway Middle College High School.[21] Located on the campus of Bunker Hill

Community College since 1990, the Fenway School serves 200 of Boston's 10th, 11th, and 12th graders who have not experienced success elsewhere.

The school began in 1983 as a school-within-a-school at Boston English High School, charged with providing a supportive environment for students deemed at risk of dropping out. Headmaster Sidney Smith deserves great credit for nurturing the idea and providing the school the breathing space it needed. According to Myatt, the program was to answer the question, "Where do we put the armbreakers, these recalcitrant kids that can't go anywhere else?" The students were agency referrals, kids with behavior problems—as Myatt says, "older, behind, failing, disenfranchised . . . a very difficult clientele."

In the past, the system's best hope for students like these was to keep them in school and out of trouble for a couple more years. Instead, the Fenway School is turning their lives around. While the citywide dropout rate is 33 percent,[22] this school's is 8 percent. Of 1991 Fenway School graduates, 75 percent planned to attend college. Kenny J. came to the school a tough fistfighter reading at a fourth grade level. After graduation, he dropped by to borrow algebra books to prepare for a job at Boston Edison, where he is a $32,000-a-year lineman supporting his family. Sandy Martinez, in a 1989 *Boston Globe* article, described her change from a young woman so angry that she once punched through the screen on a television, to a future health care professional looking forward to next year at Roxbury Community College.

How does it work? Fenway students have a chance to live the lesson that freedom and responsibility go hand in hand. "Nobody is guarding the door, nobody tells them when to go to lunch, and nobody is telling them they need a pass to go to the bathroom," says Myatt. The school offers its students the adult choices and responsibilities that come with attending a commuter college, along with some structure, a lot of caring, and the individual attention that a large high school cannot always provide.

"In a traditional school, if a kid puts his head on the desk, the teacher can't do much about it because he or she has 150 kids to deal with," says Nathan. "Here we can deal with the problem and try to resolve it together. We get more concerned and involved with their total lives, and not just their school lives."

Classes at Fenway are small. The curriculum is not compartmentalized into discrete academic subjects, but mirrors the complexity of the adult world. Rather than English or geometry, students study humanities, American studies, and integrated math. The city is part of the classroom. Projects with themes like "Is Boston a Good Place to Live?" challenge students to investigate, ponder, and discuss aspects of city life, from crime and safety to professional opportunities for women. Work/study arrangements with outside employers introduce students to a variety of careers through paying jobs.

Come test time, a visitor to the Fenway School is unlikely to find a roomful of students sweating silently over blank pieces of paper. American Studies students are asked to come to their final exam as personalities from history or literature. One year, Captain Ahab, the Indian chief Tecumseh, and others shared their views of the world in 10-minute presentations. "We're getting kids to learn to question things for themselves," explains Myatt. "We feel that's more effective than accepting an answer that's provided for you."

Possibly more important than any other course is the weekly, required advisory group in which students and teachers discuss grades, schedules, and community and personal issues. "We believe people need to treat the heart before the head," says Myatt.

The pedagogy and community of the Fenway School evolved over a decade. Its current location, physically separate and largely autonomous from Boston English, resulted from an intensive campaign by Nathan, Myatt, and members of the school's staff and community to launch the school in the manner of a start-up business. "We worked for an entire year on a mission statement and a strategic plan," said Nathan. "For school teachers, that is an enormous agenda to take on. We did it through a business model, which was acutely uncomfortable for us . . . 'action plans' and 'goals' and 'objectives.'"

Nathan found it challenging to transplant the hard-nosed business agenda essential to the school's viability into the soft-edged, team-oriented educational culture that made the school work. "We worked very hard in developing a vocabulary, a shared vocabulary of education," she said. The hard work paid off, Nathan explained:

I had lunch with a staff member last week. He said, "When I think back to those times, when we were working out the mission statement and taking on our own destiny, the heart of it was the creation of a *community.* Somehow what had happened was that one was brought into an entity that was more than the sum of its parts. There was an ethos that went beyond individual perspectives."

The creation of community is reflected in teacher attendance:

> The ethos was that the Fenway was a team—we were going to do the best we could for each other and for the kids eight hours a day. And that is still the thing here. Our teacher attendance is phenomenal. Every teacher is allotted fifteen sick days a year [by contract]. Among our whole staff, we haven't had fifteen sick days. People are committed to being here—it goes beyond what they're individually going to get out of it. It's a team effort.

The catalyst for the soul-searching was a budget crunch that forced Boston English out of its building on Louis Pasteur Avenue and into smaller quarters at the former Jamaica Plain High School. Nathan feared that the new arrangement would threaten the integrity of the Fenway program, which had enjoyed its own classrooms, cafeteria, office, and rest rooms at Boston English. "[I felt] the move . . . would be disastrous to our organizational structure," she recalls. "The program would have no common meeting place, we would not 'own' our own classrooms, and we would lose much of the autonomy we had fought so hard to gain."

Nathan spent her maternity leave searching for an alternative location. Meetings with consultants, advisors, fundraisers, and school administrators eventually led to an arrangement with Bunker Hill Community College. With the enthusiastic cooperation of then-college president Piedad Robertson, the Fenway School in 1990 became one of the nation's handful of urban "middle colleges."

Fenway students may select some courses from the Bunker Hill offerings and participate in activities at the college. The college environment exerts a subtle but strong influence, reinforcing the notion of adult responsibility. It also demystifies higher education, allowing students, perhaps for the first time, to see it as an attainable goal.

Yet unlike a college program, the Fenway School structures personal support for students into the curriculum. "Most of these kids don't have a support system in place," says Myatt. "There isn't a warm meal and a bed waiting for them at home. We can't take that for granted in urban schools." Without addressing these needs, "there's no point then talking about academics. It just doesn't happen."

Because the Fenway aims to help students make the transition into the workaday world, it traditionally would be considered a vocational program. "On some level, that's a dirty word," says Myatt. "'Vocational ed is for the bad kids, the dumb kids.' We'd really like to be able to say that *all* of our kids are doing some kind of vocational training, and that it's connected to academics." The Fenway approach arms students with life skills as well as exposure to careers.

Learning at Fenway Middle College High School is structured differently from a traditional high school. The classes here are seventy minutes long. Weeks are set aside for outside projects that use the city as a laboratory. An on-the-job program exposes students interested in medical careers to different jobs at Children's Hospital. Weekend camping trips offer another bridge between school life and the outside world.

The innovative pedagogy demands a professional stretch from most traditionally trained teachers. "Given that we get our staff assigned, what we do is a miracle," says Nathan. "I remember the year we were assigned a math teacher whom I was told was the worst math teacher in Boston public schools. . . . She did a complete turnaround, because she was in an environment that was nurturing, that was supportive, where she was respected."

While unique in Boston, the Fenway School shares the goals and ideology of the other members of an educational association based at Brown University, the Coalition of Essential Schools. Essential Schools attempt to make learning more active for the student, emphasizing depth of learning rather than breadth. The Essential Schools' philosophy, summed up by Myatt, is "less is more, small is better, mastery is fundamental, student as worker." Critics of Essential Schools contend that, given the constraints of the school day, the emphasis on depth of learning can cheat students out of exposure to a broad range of topics. For example, according to Boston English headmaster Sidney Smith, who assisted in developing the Fenway program, the Essential Schools approach would make it hard to cover all of U.S. history in the one year allotted by the Boston school system. "There's a gap between principle and reality that's difficult to struggle with," Smith says.

On the other hand, the Essential Schools approach brings acclaimed material like the "Facing History and Ourselves" program to Fenway students. This national program, based in Brookline, Massachusetts, uses the Nazi Holocaust to explore issues of citizenship and morality. Choosing depth over breadth allows the staff to move around regular classes to accommodate a schoolwide "project week" or host events like the day-long "teach-in" on the Persian Gulf war.

Senior exhibition week at the Fenway School highlights Myatt and Nathan's accomplishments. Before graduating, each student must prepare a portfolio featuring his achievements at the school. The portfolio must include a written thesis, but students may also use other forms of expression including poetry, fine arts, and computer or video works created in the school's multimedia center. Creating the portfolio and defending it in a short oral exam give graduating seniors the opportunity to take and show pride in their accomplishments.

Solving problems in education, according to Myatt, is not a matter of addressing one variable or another. "It's all connected," he says. "You can't talk about school without talking about economics. You can't talk about economics without talking about racism. You can't talk about racism without talking about capitalism, and if you try to separate those things out and you don't see that education is the fabric of our society and that our society is complex, you're not going to get anywhere."

According to the *Boston Globe*, "There is no magic in moving at-risk students onto a college campus. The success of the middle college program lies in its small classes, individualized attention, emphasis on critical thinking, and expanded view of the classroom."[23] As this start-up school continues to transform would-be dropouts into determined students, other school leaders still committed to the traditional classroom may have to sit up and take note. "It's clearly part of a movement," says Myatt. "People are coming to the realization that all schools don't have to be the same. We've created a sort of nurturing niche, and it seems to be working."

The Bureaucratic Culture

Why are these schools, each excellent in its own way, the exception rather than the rule? For one thing, most programs imposed on the schools by Court Street are watered down, the product of a long process of compromise and accommodation. Moreover, even many of these programs are obstructed in their implementation. The cooperation—if not enthusiastic participation—of administrators at all levels, teachers, and other school staff is essential to any program's success. They are the "street-level bureaucrats" who can silently veto programs through their inaction.[24] Coercive policies and the threat of penalties are never adequate to overcome their recalcitrance. Staff members in conflict with their leader and among themselves are an insurmountable impediment to reform.

Charismatic leadership articulating a persuasive and sometimes controversial educational plan, and a staff voluntarily joined with this leadership to implement it, are two essential elements for radical reform. One principal has established the mission of integrating special education children in the regular classroom. But she is prohibited from writing a job description for the new teaching position and attracting staff who believe in the educational design:

> If the union were interested in education, I could say to them: "Look, we're going to integrate some special needs children at the _____ School. Now what I'd like to do is to post those positions for those classes that we're doing it in. Because I'd like prospective teachers to know what they're getting into. I'd like the teachers who *want* to do it." I'd like the teachers to understand that they have to use a different methodology from what they're working with. And I can't.
>
> I don't want to take anyone's job and have them out of work, believe me. But I just feel some people would be happier in another school. If they want to stay here, they have at least to accept—well these are the working conditions at the _____ School—they can't subvert the integration.[25]

Some teachers attended core meetings and referred children to substantially separate settings against the will of both the parents and the principal:

> We kept losing children. And not for the good of the child, because, I'm sorry, children regress when they're in substantially separate classrooms.
>
> On more than one occasion I've had to say to teachers, "Look, this is the philosophy. This is what we are promoting. This is what we are saying, this is what we are trying here." "But I don't agree with it." "All right, I appreciate what you are saying—that you don't agree with it. But there are 117 schools in Boston—find another place to go." I can't say that.[26]

Many Boston principals are frustrated with central administration's repeated policy reversals, and with the instability and wasted money and effort that result from changing directives. One principal cited the change in policy from pulling out to mainstreaming bilingual and special education students:

> There's a lot of confusion as to how it should be done. We've been pulling them out. Now look at what we're doing: putting them back in the room again. All that money lost. All that time. Isn't that something?
>
> Well, damn it, maybe if you work with someone who *wants* to do it their way. You show me someone who's really interested in this and let them go out and pilot this thing and do *the best job they can with it*—and then show me, so that when people say you can't do it, show them—instead of the district office doing a report and then decreeing, that's the school we're going to do it in, and investing some money, and some guru shows up at that school who does workshops.[27]

The current bureaucratic system in the Boston schools has caused a nearly complete absence of trust. With suspicion the organizing principle, countless bureaucratic rules and procedures, watchdog departments, and checks and balances prevent abuses and alert one group to another's transgression. For example, the hiring manager does not have final authority, as he would in a corporation. Each decision must be second-guessed not only by the personnel department but also the Department of Equity, which can challenge any personnel decision if it is thought to violate various desegregative court orders. Not only does a culture of suspicion create a clock-watching work environment where staff are unlikely to put in extra effort, the redundant functions and elaborate paperwork are terribly costly. Less than a third of administrative staff time is engaged in productive actions.

Distrust is also the organizing principle in special education. Rather than relying on a provider's professional discretion, an elaborate system of reviews of Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) and due process rights of appeal consume staff time that could otherwise be spent with children. Not only must a broad range of child advocates and specialists be consulted in the development of each child's IEP, parents also have a legal right to appeal the IEP's provisions. The district must foot the bill. Still another bureaucracy is required to prevent contract abuse. Even minor purchases of less than one hundred dollars are combined with those of other schools and then put up for bid through the purchasing department, and eventually require the mayor's signature. Distrust is so endemic to BPS's culture that some staff members seem unaware that it could function on any other basis.

The system relies on petty rules and discourages initiative. One enterprising principal invited community leaders to come to the school and read to the children during National Children's Book Week:

> Our goal was to have readers in every classroom. And I got a call from the curriculum department: "Did you get permission to have those people?" Liz Walker, a beloved Boston newscaster, was one of the people coming. "Did you get permission?" I said, "Permission for Liz Walker to come and read to the children at the _____ School? " "Excuse me, I was in the central office for six years. If a school did that I'd be shaking the hand of the principal and saying, 'Great job—how nice that you motivated the children.'" At Court Street, they're so tied into that mentality of "we're overseers of everything" and they're not. The schools are going to do their own thing. Initiative should be rewarded and not punished.[28]

The antithesis of the Boston public schools and the large public bureaucracy is the organization of entrepreneurial businesses. Despite inferior resources, these start-up firms often surpass their large established competitors in a market niche. Invariably, everyone working in the firm is expected to do more with less. Constraints that would be felt as debilitating in a bureaucratic environment are instead thrilling.

Some employees in entrepreneurial companies are driven by winning; their satisfaction derives from producing a better product than the competition or selling more of it. But for most, the only opponent is oneself, or perhaps the expectations of those outside. The challenge is to recruit a talented and harmonious staff, realize an elegant design, set a new standard of customer support, or operate a manufacturing line with low inventory. Each staff member is engaged with his own piece of the whole, but motivated by a sense of group enterprise. In *The Soul of a New Machine,* Tracy Kidder described how a small team in a large computer company obtained the commitment from each of its new engineers to work feverishly hard to build the best minicomputer in the world:

> There was, it appeared, a mysterious rite of initiation through which, one way or another, almost every member of the team passed. The term that the old hands used for this rite . . . was "signing up." By signing up for the project, you agreed to do whatever was necessary for success. . . . Labor was no longer coerced. Labor volunteered. When you signed up you in effect declared, "I want to do this job and I'll give it my heart and soul." It cut another way. The vice president of engineering . . . said much later on, "Sometimes I worry that I pushed too hard. I tried not to push any harder than I would on myself. That's why, by the way, you have to go through the sign up. To be sure you're not conning anybody.
>
> The rite was not accomplished with formal declarations, as a rule . . . a statement such as "Yeah, I'll do that" could constitute the act of signing up, and often it was done tacitly. [29]

After interviewing a candidate, one member said,

> "He seems to be saying he doesn't want to sign up." The other lieutenant pondered the application. "I don't think he'd be happy here."[30]

James Q. Wilson has written, "Every organization has a culture, that is, a persistent, patterned way of thinking about the central tasks of and human relationships within an organization. Culture is to an organization what personality is to an individual."[31] The bureaucratic culture of the typical large urban school system ties the hands of its staff. Discretion and authority are greatly impaired, goals are diffuse, and staff members are held responsible only for following the process—no one is accountable for the actual results. No wonder, then, that the public schools are doing poorly by nearly every educational measure, while private and parochial schools, free of such cultural impediments, continue to do well.

If all participants in the Boston school system—parents, teachers, students, and administrators—can agree that the system's current organizational culture is an irremediable obstacle to quality education, they will have taken the first step toward reinventing Boston's schools. The next step is to replace the current tangle of prescriptions with a scant set of fundamental proscriptions against discrimination. Then, toward the common goal of improving education, allow people to choose their own means to an end: Let teachers, principals, and parents come together to form new schools of their own vision, schools that are right for them.

An organization's culture changes slowly, if at all. The long history and the many political and legal constraints of a government agency make it difficult for its nominal leader to affect its culture, let alone infuse it with a vibrant sense of mission. But, as Wilson writes,

> Sometimes an organization is endowed with a sense of mission. . . . This usually occurs during the formative experience of the organization, an experience shaped and interpreted by a founder who imposes his or her will on the first generation of operators in a way that profoundly affects succeeding generations. . . . The imprint is deepest and most lasting when the founding executive has a strong personality and forcefully expressed vision of what the organization should be.[32]

Newly founded schools would be organizations in which, to use Wilson's terms, there is no need to tell people what to do: They know what to do and want to do it well.[33] Each school will subscribe to a certain educational philosophy and cater to certain needs. The administration and outside authorities must resist the temptation to intervene, to prejudge which designs will succeed and which will fail, to say what will and will not go.

How could entrepreneurial leadership and the culture of the start-up be exploited to remake our city's schools? Chapter 5 offers a plan.

CHAPTER FIVE

Transforming Boston's Schools

AS CHAPTER 4 DESCRIBED, the vital characteristic of effective schools, subscription, is best realized not by mandating that school site councils govern by consensus, but by freeing charismatic leaders to step forward and articulate a coherent vision for their schools. Such a vision need not be original. It merely need resonate with the experience of some teachers; others will be drawn to different leaders and different visions. The chapter also likened exceptional urban schools to entrepreneurial companies; both rely on strong leadership, a clear purpose, and a committed staff.

Both also face long odds: The start-up company must generally overcome financing, personnel, technological, and marketing risks. Available capital may be insufficient to develop the product and bring it to market before operations become profitable. The founders of the enterprise may be unable to recruit professionals with the required skills and "fit." Technological limitations may make the product impossible to develop. Finally, another company may win the race to market the product, or anticipated demand may fail to materialize.

The entrepreneurial school also faces extraordinary challenges, although of a different nature. The school must overcome the many deficits of its often disadvantaged students, including troubled home lives, drugs and violence, lack of cognitive development in early childhood, and a home culture not supportive of education. The schools' leaders may be constrained by regulations, an inadequate budget, and a decrepit physical plant. In both the start-up school and business, the key factor for success is the determination of the staff, which stems from a personal commitment to the organization's leadership and a shared belief in the organization's purpose. This shared belief fuels a high level of effort from staff members, who work together in a rare atmosphere of cooperation. How can more entrepreneurial schools be launched? Can the formation of start-up businesses offer a model?

The Formation of Entrepreneurial Businesses

Only fifty years ago, American public schools were an international model; today, we concede that most other developed countries do a better job of educating their children. In business, too, we have accepted the loss not only of mature industries but, more distressingly, of growth markets like consumer electronics. Yet America retains a singular strength: the ability to invent entirely new products and markets. Behind the growth industries of the last twenty years—personal computers, software, and most recently biotechnology—is the world of start-ups and venture capital firms. With remarkable efficiency, these institutions encourage individual initiative, sponsor innovation, and link ideas, people, and capital. How does the process work? While there are obviously many variations, the following is the general pattern for the formation of start-up firms.

Many start-up founders have left top management positions in large companies or have successfully founded other firms. But the founder is as likely to be a young engineer in a technology company or a branch manager in a service firm. Although he often lacks both financial and managerial experience, his drive and the strength of his idea are enough to lure both investors and senior management personnel.

The first step for the founder is to conceptualize the product or service, to identify its target market, and to define the company's mission. A seed business plan is then written to attract an initial investment in the firm. In product companies, this investment is generally sufficient to fund the design of the product and the construction of operating prototypes. During this period initial customers often either purchase prototypes or commit to buying production units when available.

Financing is usually obtained from venture capitalists who make high-risk investments in emerging companies, hoping for a high return. Most venture capital firms are small. Each of several partners might make only one new investment a year. The venture capitalist divides his time between evaluating prospective investments and following existing ones. While investors reject most plans submitted, a handful are rigorously scrutinized and lead to an investment. This evaluation often takes several months, relying not only on careful market research and the advice of consulting experts, but also on a subjective evaluation of the entrepreneur and his team.

Venture capitalists and the start-up founder have a peculiar association. The investor is savvy in business and finance and the entrepreneur often naive. Invariably, the investor is eager to contribute expertise, not just money, so that errors can be averted. Yet the skilled venture investor resists the temptation to meddle. If he attempts to manage the enterprise, the founder is alarmed, and rightly so. After all, if business experience alone offered the formula for success, the investor could go into business by himself. A successful alliance requires a leap of faith, a continuing affirmation of the founder's insight, through both good times and bad. The investor may disagree with decisions the entrepreneur makes and must tolerate failures along the path. But the investor must allow the founder to lead, in order for the enterprise to succeed.

Now the company has developed a working prototype, or perfected the service to be delivered, and is ready to bring it to market. Many risks have been reduced since the seed financing. The managerial team has been assembled, representing the diverse skills needed to run the business. Distributors are ready to sign on. A larger investment must now be raised, the first-round financing. To attract it, a detailed business plan is written, covering all aspects of the venture, including the product, the market opportunity, the financial projections, and the credentials of the management team.

If the product or service's viability in the marketplace has been demonstrated, an additional round of capital is often required before the company becomes financially self-sufficient. In other cases, additional financing fuels faster growth or an expansion to new markets and products.

Adapting the Entrepreneurial Model

How might this system of venture formation provide us with a model for the formation of entrepreneurial schools in Boston?

Just as any engineer can submit a business plan for a start-up business, any teacher or principal in the district could advance a seed school plan. Many plans would be expected to come from teachers who have conceived of a school free of the constraints of their current environment. Like the seed business plan, it would be expected to address certain questions:

> What is the mission of the proposed school? What students will it serve? Is there a demonstrated demand for its product? What is its distinctive curricular and pedagogic offering? What are the founding team's strengths? How will it be governed? How will it spend its per capita funding? How will it ensure educational equity?

Seed plans would be reviewed by one of several sponsoring councils, the functional equivalent of venture capital firms. These councils would be small, allowing their members to know each other well and ensure that each plan receives careful attention and discussion. Multiple councils could provide a market for the school entrepreneurs: A plan rejected by one might be sponsored by another.

Council members, approved by the superintendent, would include university educators, distinguished academics, and civic, religious, and business leaders with an interest in education. In addition to reviewing and selecting school plans, council members would also function as mentors, counseling the leaders of their "portfolio" of schools and serving as a sounding board for ideas. Once the "investment" was made by the district, a council member would have a seat on the school's board of trustees, along with members of the school's management, teachers, and parents. The board meetings would provide a forum for discussion, problem solving, and advice. Council members would aid their schools in forging alliances with outside institutions, including universities, corporations, and other schools facing similar challenges.

Just as in business, not all seed plans would be financed. Some plans, while incomplete, would show sufficient promise to spark a council member's interest. He might then offer advice on how to strengthen the plan, or suggest possible co-founders who could bring complementary administrative or educational skills to the project.

While the founder or founders would draft the seed plan on their own time and at their own expense, the seed financing, once the plan was approved, would provide the equivalent of one year's salary. Founders would then leave their existing posts for a one-year sabbatical to develop a full-length school plan. As in business, members of the team would refine their educational product and identify their market of students. They would solicit parents and sign on an initial student enrollment (the school's first customers). Much of this time would be spent surveying educational research, evaluating potential component programs, provisionally recruiting teachers and staff, and visiting schools outside the district to review best demonstrated practices. To provide support for these activities, the school system would open a leadership academy in conjunction with a local college or university. The academy would serve as the liaison to community resources such as graduate schools, schools of education, interactive technology companies, foundations, and grant makers. Professors would offer seminars in school site administration, school budgeting and financial planning, state and federal laws and regulations, and other skills specific to the administration of Boston's schools.

Metropolitan Boston, circled by Route 128, is a center of entrepreneurial activity. Each month, at the Route 128 Venture Forum, hundreds of people don color-coded name tags identifying themselves as either founders, managers, investors, or service providers (accountants, consultants, and lawyers) and meet over breakfast. A microphone is circulated; each attendee is given a chance to introduce himself and state his goals. The session and others like it at MIT and venture capital conferences bring together people with compatible personalities and aims. In the same way, the leadership academy would sponsor weekend forums where teachers and administrators developing plans and seeking to recruit team members could formally present their plans to an audience of colleagues and sponsoring council members. Not only would teachers be stimulated to explore their own educational beliefs, but they would have the opportunity to meet and join with others who share them.

A detailed school plan would typically be finished in one year and then submitted to one or more sponsoring councils. Table 5-1 outlines the plan's components.

TABLE 5-1
SCHOOL PLAN: OUTLINE

Executive Summary	
The School Mission	
The Educational Product	
Curriculum	*(An arts school, a back-to-basics school, a school for young mothers with infants in the class, a technical school, a school for at-risk children, etc. The specific courses to be offered.)*
Assessment	
Pedagogy	*(Interactive technology, team teaching, two-way bilingual, a Reading Recovery school, member of the Coalition of Essential Schools, etc.)*
Special Education Plan	
The Customers	*(Who will the school serve?)*
Plan for Diversity	
Anti-Discrimination Policy	
Management Team	*(Backgrounds, skills, and credentials of the management team.)*
Staffing Plan and Schedule	
Risk Assessment	*(How might the venture fail? Major risks—recruitment, pedagogical, financial—are identified, and a plan to minimize each.)*
Financials	*(Number of students, district funding by capitation, sources of external funds, detailed budgets.)*
Year 1 Budget	
Projected Income Statement, Years 1–5	
Projected Cash Flow, Years 1–5	
Notes to the Financials	

The full-length plan would be carefully reviewed over several months by sponsoring councils, and not all seed plans would be financed in their full-length form. Their review would include due-diligence checks on the founders' strengths and weaknesses, an analysis of the proposed budget and compliance with regulatory requirements, and scrutiny of the proposed pedagogy and curriculum. The councils would consult outside experts. They would also hold repeated meetings to challenge the plan's assumptions, build rapport with the founders, and test the team's preparedness for undertaking the school venture. If selected, the district administration would allocate the necessary space in an existing school facility. The next fall, the new school would open its doors.

Funding: Stable and by Capitation

In keeping with the model of an educational market within the district, funding for each entrepreneurial school would be by capitation. The school's budget would be solely a function of the number of students it enrolls. Funding must be equitable and above all stable to sustain the morale of all participants and keep the playing field level. Higher per-student rates would be set for LEP (Limited English Proficiency) and low-income students. To encourage mainstreaming of special needs students with minor disabilities (physical, cognitive, or emotional), those special education students currently assigned to the lowest level prototype, 502.1 (see chapter 8), would be at the regular education capitation level. Students currently in the "pull-out" prototypes 502.2 and 502.3 would bear an additional $2,000. Students with more serious disabilities in the substantially separate prototypes, 502.4 and 502.8, would bear a capitation determined for each student by the district. Table 5-2 presents a schedule for these funding rates; substantially separate special needs students are here reflected at a nominal rate.

TABLE 5-2
SCHEDULE FOR FUNDING RATES
(Based on FY93 projected revenues and costs)

Student	Base Rate ($)
Regular Education	4,630
Special Needs: Pull-outs (502.2, 502.3)	6,630
Special Needs: Substantially Separate (502.4, 502.8)	7,630

Student	Supplement ($)
LEP	500
Low-Income	500

Sources: Author's calculations; Author's projected district office cost reductions; FY93 Program Budget, Budget Office, Boston Public Schools, 24 February 1992; Enrollment data, Boston Public Schools, 10 January 1992.

To supplement the district funding, schools should be free to solicit external grants from public and private sources and accept in-kind donations of equipment, materials, and other resources.

In business, investment is much easier to attract when customers have already been secured for the company's unfinished product. Similarly, sponsoring councils would perceive the risk of a proposed school to be greatly reduced if it came with a full year's waiting list of students. While advance enrollment would strengthen the school's case, it would not be required for investment. Just as a business plan must convincingly project the break-even point, at which financial self-sufficiency is attained, the school plan would project its analogue. A choice school would be considered self-sufficient when its enrollment is composed entirely of voluntarily enrolled students. In a venture firm, operations are initially sustained by investment capital. As orders for the product come in, operations are increasingly funded by sales. A new school would likewise initially operate entirely from the per capita funds tied to an initial enrollment guaranteed by the district. But as parents increasingly chose the school, it would survive on its ability to attract and sustain voluntary enrollment. The founders of a school could select the level of initial investment they sought to attract, depending on both the expected market for their specialized school and their projection of how long it would take to attract a following. These students would then be assigned to the school. When the initial grant of assigned students was depleted, however, the school would either have to succeed in attracting students or it would close. This mechanism provides the crucial grace period for the new organization to take risks, make and correct mistakes, and attract a customer base, all with minimum outside interference.

In the East Harlem project, Seymour Fliegel and other leaders also recognized the need to tolerate inevitable mistakes by the new schools: "The district leadership must have confidence in the new school's leadership even when they do some foolish things."[1] Entrepreneurs cannot be viewed as employees who can be replaced at their sponsor's discretion and the enterprise sustained under new management. In start-ups, such drastic interventions nearly always fail, because the founder, the organization, and its culture are all intertwined. The investor's grant of authority must be substantive and long lasting.

The fate of teams awarded grants would rest on their "bottom line" performance, which would have two components: the attraction of students under choice and a minimum annual improvement on the new school assessments (see chapter 6). The test requirement is important to ensure an academic focus in the schools, to discourage schools from marketing frivolous features, and to provide opportunities to other teams to step in if schools are successful in attracting students but are failing to educate.

If a school did fail to attract students, the sponsoring council could decide whether to recapitalize it by providing funds for continued operations, or to turn the facility over to a new team. Failing schools must not be rewarded, as they are in both Boston and New York City. As Sy Fliegel has observed, if a school is failing today it qualifies for aid, and if it is doing well, it loses it.[2] Under an entrepreneurial system, the reverse would be true. Just as in the business world, however, the failure of a school would not, in itself, stigmatize its founders or prevent them from launching another school. Successful teams could submit plans to extend their school approach to additional facilities and receive additional backing.

In this way, the city's bureaucratically controlled schools would gradually give way to new schools-within-schools. Current principals would serve as building managers and hosts to the schools-within-schools, and, like anyone else, could draft a plan for an entrepreneurial school.[3] An outstanding principal's record and the endorsement of her teachers would recommend her plan; if sponsored, she could assume the roles of both school director and building manager.

Schools would be differentiated not only by theme (a music school, a science and engineering school, a business school), but by pedagogy, culture, and clientele. One school might cater to students who flourish under traditional didactic teaching and another to "active learners" with different cognitive requirements who are failing in a conventional school.[4] The culture of the new schools—policies, ideologies, means of governance, expectations of teachers and students, and countless other characteristics— would vary sharply from one institution to the next as it does in private and parochial schools. While some schools would be founded by one person, others would be led by a team of equals. While some schools would place stock in hierarchical management, others would operate democratically, giving each staff member an equal voice. One school would regard parents as clients who, by choosing the school, have delegated their authority to it; others would involve parents in governance. Some schools might cater to particular clients, like young mothers with infants in the classroom, at-risk students, or returning dropouts.

For-Profit Schools

Because, as Denis Doyle has noted, profit is a bad word in public education circles,[5] the district may initially choose to reject for-profit school plans. In the longer term, this prejudice should be discarded. Some school entrepreneurs may argue persuasively that a bottom line discipline and the financial incentives of equity ownership to the school's founders, teachers, and other stakeholders may make the school more—not less—responsive to its clients.

Radically improving student outcomes in the nation's schools will, of course, require more than changes in school organization. Corporations spend 7 percent or more of total revenues on the research and development of new products and services. Boston, like most districts, spends less than 0.5 percent on its poorly regarded "curriculum and instruction" department. No wonder then, as Kenneth Wilson has noted, that the educational product, classroom teaching, has changed little over the last half century. The remarkable success of Reading Recovery signals the dazzling potential of scientifically engineered learning interventions.[6] New interactive learning systems based on watershed technology (like interactive computer disks) could vastly accelerate learning and boost student achievement. But the development of effective courseware, which requires identifying and cataloguing how diverse learners apprehend—and misapprehend—subject matter, will require a vast commitment of funds.

Good management, contracted services, purchasing efficiencies, and other improvements will not be enough to squeeze a surplus from most schools. Only the availability of such electronic technologies could significantly alter the school's cost structure, in which most of the budget now goes to personnel expense. If, as Doyle notes, students could then learn twice as fast and at half the cost, schools could post the kind of profits that, on a large scale, would attract the major capital investment required to develop such instructional technology.

Admissions

In designing school choice plans, the question of selective admissions is particularly vexing. On the one hand, the right of the school to choose compatible students may be vital to maintaining its distinctive character. A music school or a school for the performing arts may not be able to achieve a reputation for excellence if it cannot audition its applicants and establish their native talents. Likewise, a school for at-risk students or even a school targeting students of a certain cognitive style may have a compelling need to seek out particular students. As Thernstrom has argued, if choice creates a better match between school and student, then the schools should have some say about which students fit in.[7] On the other hand, should schools be allowed to establish academic selection standards, the danger exists that elite schools will drain the best students from other schools, demoralizing teachers and trapping weak students in the poorest schools. Worse still, newly formed schools may predominantly cater to strong students, since educationally disadvantaged students are often hard to teach.

Nathan Glazer has called the arguments for and against selectivity "a tragic conflict of values that simply cannot be mitigated."[8] The best solution may be that proposed by Christopher Jencks. In the event that a school has more applicants than places, it could selectively admit up to half of its students; the other half would be randomly chosen from applicants. In any event, the schools could not discriminate on the basis of racial or ethnic background, religion, or sexual orientation.[9]

The Limits to the Model

The entrepreneurial model for freeing the supply of new schools will raise several objections. Are schools really like businesses? Should schools compete? Is the plan too risky? And, above all, is it equitable?

Businesses, it is said, have one goal: to make a profit. Schools have multiple aims, and there is no clear bottom line against which to measure performance. Many educators delight in this argument against choice and accountability because it feeds their unfortunate antipathy toward business. Yet, while initially persuasive, the argument rests on two fallacies. Educators assume that all corporations seek only to maximize their current profitability and that all managers are held accountable to this one measure. Neither is the case. Many of our largest corporations were built by persons whose commitment to their mission—whether advancing public health, promoting air travel, or developing an informed citizenry—was passionate, and not a mere disguise for personal avarice. In companies today, some programs survive because they further these missions, even if they operate at a loss. More importantly, in their annual review most corporate managers are held accountable for multiple goals—and except for division and general managers, profit is *not* one of them. An engineering manager might be responsible for completing a complex design on schedule, recruiting a capable staff, and addressing deficiencies in his managerial style. But his performance cannot be directly measured in dollars.

By the same token, to argue that schools have no "bottom line" is to excuse them from distilling priorities and charging staff with clear, measurable goals. Most people find working toward a short list of specific (and preferably measurable) goals far more satisfying than pursuing many amorphous ends. In the absence of such goals, as in any organization, a time-serving mentality sets in.[10] That society has broadened its expectations of schools does not lessen the need for them to clarify and state their priorities. Facing these extraordinary demands, the best schools will hide behind neither a platitudinous goal (such as "to create a place where children can learn") nor the claim that all measures from reading scores to self-esteem are equally important. If a school does, it will accomplish no more than any organization that lacks a clear purpose and measurable goals.

Administrators in Boston argue that promoting self-esteem, improving discipline, raising reading scores, cultivating responsible sexuality, sustaining native languages, teaching subject matter, and encouraging higher-order thinking are *all* important. With such a laundry list, no particular goal has much consequence. A persuasive school plan relies on a general principle to order and unify these goals. For instance, consider one possible school. It might claim that higher-order thinking, while commendable, is impossible without a vocabulary of facts and concepts. Likewise, it might maintain that the best way to raise self-esteem is not by contriving to pump up a child's self-image, but by exposing him to a first and intoxicating taste of academic accomplishment. In this case, the subordinate goals of higher-order thinking skills and student self-esteem are not excluded by the primary one, but linked to it through the logic of the school's mission.

A related objection to the model is that educators and entrepreneurs have different motivations—entrepreneurs to make money and teachers to help children. But driven, enterprising people are found in all walks of life, and personal financial gain is important only to some and in varying measures. Others seek accomplishment, recognition, power, or personal challenge—all appropriate goals for a school's founder. Even business founders, despite the myth, are rarely seeking just to make money. As Jeffry A. Timmons, an expert on entrepreneurship at the Harvard Business School, has written,

> Entrepreneurs . . . are more driven by building the enterprise and realizing long-term capital gains than by instant gratification through high salaries and

> perks. A sense of personal achievement and accomplishment, feeling in control of their own destinies, and realizing their vision and dreams are also powerful motivators. Money is viewed as a tool and a way of keeping score.[11]

Despite their differences, then, entrepreneurs and enterprising educators have much in common.

Some policymakers will deny that teachers and other educators have the necessary imagination and enterprise to pioneer the new schools. But interviews with Boston teachers and principals suggest otherwise. Many described with pride their ingenious (and convincing) designs for resolving some of the most intractable problems in education today, such as educating recent immigrants and reducing the rolls of special education. As the culture of the schools is changed, and the burdensome restrictions on school leaders are lifted, many eager to participate in urban education will newly consider the profession. Anyone who knows how to educate children and wishes to make a contribution should be invited to participate (see chapter 10).

The mediocrity of some of the city's principals tells us nothing about the talent that could be had if job descriptions promised real authority and executive searches were conducted. As one principal said,

> If principalships were genuinely opened up in Boston to national searches, you'd have hundreds of people applying for each one and you would have the pick of top-of-the-line people. I don't think we're getting top-notch people. . . . We have got to find a way to make every principal reapply for the job.[12]

Sy Fliegel, former deputy superintendent of East Harlem's District 4, comments,

> The question of exceptional leaders is raised whenever the possibility of replication [of District 4's program] is discussed. I feel that every school district in this country has the potential leaders. . . . We created a climate that encouraged teachers to come forward with their dreams, visions or ideas on how to educate youngsters. . . . They were able to communicate that vision to teachers, students, and parents who then took ownership of the dream.[13]

Many of Boston's current principals, however, lack requisite experience in the many facets of management—curriculum, personnel, finance, and administration—to run the new schools. Among the causes are patronage and the gradual contraction of principals' authority; rule following requires few skills and no leadership. Many of the new school entrepreneurs with pedagogical skills but no experience running an organization or managing money will choose to complement their expertise with co-founders, including seasoned business administrators.

Many educators are nervous about the prospect of education being "taken over" by business. Businesses, they assume, want schools only to train people for the marketplace. This not being our only interest in education, school-business alliances that define education in utilitarian terms are worrisome.[14] But this plan seeks only to replace bureaucratic practices with other ways of organizing human effort that have proven effective in the private sector. Schools would be free to determine their own goals; some would emphasize the skills businesses want, while others would emphasize the value of education in and of itself. Parents would be free to choose the approach closest to their own values.

When Boston University assumed responsibility for Chelsea's schools, it recognized the imperative of escaping the political and bureaucratic decision making of the district office. The partnership's contract allowed the university to exploit private management techniques. According to Peter Greer, Chelsea superintendent and former dean of the Boston University School of Education, the agreement allows school officials for the first time "to really lead, not to be arrogant dictators, but to avoid what Boston goes through, dealing with every group, every faction, and then nothing gets done."[15]

Other critics bristle at the mention of competition: Teachers want to collaborate, not compete. Their common goal is to help children, not to "win" in the educational marketplace at the expense of other staff and students. This key objection warrants four responses. First, emerging organizations aggressively competing for customers often boast unusually collegial, supportive environments *within* the organization. Competition in the market breeds cooperation within the team, uniting it around a common purpose. The culture encourages collaboration and trust; working at cross purposes or for personal ends is condemned. While the entrepreneurial schools must attract a voluntary student enrollment, the team is free to create the culture of its choice within its own ranks. In all likelihood, it will be far *more* collaborative than that of the existing schools.

Second, the new schools will be proud of their special practices and eager to share them with staff outside the school. Bob Martin aggressively markets his school, yet helped to organize a "mini-sabbatical" at the school for other teachers and administrators to learn the McCormack's new approaches, including cooperative learning, and to bring these practices back to their own schools.[16]

Third, to the extent that it exists, the staff collegiality in Boston's schools comes at a heavy price. Mediocrity is too often tolerated, initiative discouraged, and personal excellence held suspect. The current union culture insists that everyone, regardless of performance or effort, is to be equated. All teachers are trying to do a good job; all are struggling to create a safe haven from drugs, violence, abuse, and uninvolved parents. This is clearly false and insults the union membership's intelligence. Many Boston teachers are highly capable and work very hard. Some are extraordinary; a few are uncaring and notoriously poor performers. The oppressive norms of equity deter teachers from stepping forth and taking the lead, and the union feels obliged to fight even for its most incompetent members.[17]

Entrepreneurial schools may begin as cultural islands where excellence is once again celebrated, not disparaged as an assault on equity. Like the best organizations, they will set high expectations for everyone. One teacher's extraordinary efforts will spur others to fully realize their own professional gifts and maximize their contributions to the school. Furthermore, the opportunity to create new schools in an environment of unabashedly high standards will attract college graduates and mid-career professionals who previously would have shunned teaching for professions they perceived to be less complacent and more rigorous.

It is a disturbing fact that today, many new teachers come from the lower ranks of their college classes, according to SAT scores.[18] Thomas Toch, author of *In the Name of Excellence,* points to the findings of a

Southern Regional Education Board study. The researchers analyzed the transcripts of 3,283 education graduates and 2,760 arts and science graduates from 17 major state universities in that region. Twenty-eight percent of the course credits of the education students had been transferred from community colleges, where it was estimated the average first-year student reads at an eighth grade level. In every discipline but foreign languages, secondary school teachers had fewer high level courses in their academic major than their counterparts in arts and sciences.[19] Is it any wonder that, having fared poorly in a competitive setting, some of these teachers have fought against performance-based compensation, standardized student testing, and tracking and selective admission schools—whether or not these are good policies?

Fourth, educators conceive of competition between businesses as cutthroat. Here they blur an organization's aggression in the marketplace and the behavior of its people. While each firm is proud of its ways and confident of its strengths, relations between companies and their staffs are usually cordial. In industry, engineers and managers from rival firms socialize at trade conferences, make fun of each other's companies and products, honor each other's accomplishments, belong to the same industry associations, and share information helpful to all. The same tone—proud of one's ways, respectful and curious about others—would likely arise between the emerging schools in the district.

Moreover, when the market functions, ineffective schools will either change or cede to stronger ones. In the process, the quality of everyone's work life is enhanced:

> I fully support the theory of choice, that every school should be trying to make itself so attractive that when a parent comes through the door they say, "Yeah! That's what I want for my child. I want my child to have that, I want that school." They don't choose it because, "It's in my neighborhood," they choose it because, "Wow, they have an after school program. My child can be in a high-quality program until 5:30, can have swimming instruction every single week."
>
> These could be very exciting times for the school system. I've found the marketing of the school to be very exhausting, but also very rewarding. Because

> it forces you to listen. And as I say to the teachers, the parents are the consumers. They're very aware of what they want to see in the schools.
>
> Our job is to provide what the parents expect for their children. My favorite book—and I give it to everybody—is *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About School.* It was put out by *Consumer Reports* 5 or 6 years ago. It's a guide for parents about what they should expect from a high quality school, what to look for . . . I want to be able to say to every parent who comes into this school, "If you give us your child, your child will be successful, because we will not allow your child to fail. Whether your child is a special needs child, a gifted child, a bilingual child, whatever—your child will be successful here at the _____ School."[20]

In the market for schools, critics stress, there will be winners and losers. While some lucky children will benefit from superior schools, others will be confined to inferior ones, the failures of the marketplace. While most purchase decisions are reversible, the choice of an education is for life.

This argument is superficially persuasive because it plays to the apprehensions many have of the market. But, first, will the failing schools of choice be any worse then many—if not most—urban public schools today? Probably not. In many of Boston's bureaucratically controlled schools, a disjointed faculty implements an ill-conceived academic program. It is a half-hearted effort. Under a choice program where the supply side is freed, a determined faculty would likely remain committed to its educational plan to the end, even if it failed to attract applicants.

Second, the market is a dynamic institution. The advent of choice by itself will not improve the schools. Initially, many children will continue to receive a poor education. Yet over time, as poor schools yield to superior ones, educational opportunities will be elevated systemwide. The promise of the market is for the long term. And unlike other reforms, which rely on a one-time diagnosis and intervention, the cycle of improvement under choice, once launched, will endure.

In the same vein, other critics charge that choice undercuts educational equity. Yet what is fair today about consigning most disadvantaged, urban students to a second-rate education? The parents of middle-class students, both white and minority, have already opted out of a system they deem unsatisfactory. In large part, only those who cannot afford to leave remain.

Furthermore, *any* plan for improving the schools will extract an uneven effect. Most traditional policies are appropriate to some sites and not others, or are resisted by local participants. The literature on policy implementation consistently emphasizes the difficulty of replicating an intervention's original success. Only some schools are improved, and their children benefited. By contrast, after a few years, a genuine choice plan promises to raise the opportunities afforded *all* children—even those in what are then the least desirable schools.

Finally, many educators consider choice plans risky. The incorporation of elements from the venture capital process will exacerbate this perception. It is true that many venture start-ups fail. But their failure is usually financial: they lose the race against the clock to become financially self-sustaining, and their investors fail to recoup their investment. But even in failed enterprises, the products are generally delivered and the customers satisfied. Often, the product or service is sustained by a successor company.

Fortunately, it is in their risk profile that the new schools diverge from the venture capital model. Consider both the upside gains and downside risks. In business, nine out of ten new, high-risk businesses fail financially. But the venture investor will reap an enormous gain—perhaps twenty times his investment—on the one winner. The odds for entrepreneurial schools are much more favorable. Financial success in a business requires beating the competition, generally large and profitable corporations with proven products and low costs. In the education market, the competition is made of up of schools that are for the most part failing: nearly 35 percent of Boston's students drop out, and many graduates lack basic skills. Doing better may not be easy, and many challenges must be overcome, but entrepreneurial schools are unlikely to do worse. And since a school can start with but a few classrooms, the initial investment is very modest. In short, the downside risk of school start-ups is much smaller than that of most start-up businesses. A few schools, as in the business world, may be spectacular successes, and with luck, be expanded and replicated.

Teacher Professionalism and a New Role for the Union

What is the role of the teachers' and administrators' unions in a district of entrepreneurial schools? First, consider the historical role of the union and its evolution. For a century, the schools were likened to factories. Children were their raw material, and the teachers their workers. In such an industrial bureaucracy, the unions played an essential and salutary role, ensuring decent wages and conditions for a work force vulnerable to exploitation.

Today, the notion of the education factory has long been discredited, and the rhetoric of mass production is no longer heard. But the industrial structures of employment endure. Teachers continue to be treated like factory workers, not professionals. In turn, they understandably perceive the union to be essential. Thus the union's survival is ensured, and the adversarial paradigm of labor and management sustained. While many teachers are unable to imagine schools without unions, they are not blind to the contradiction between their drive for professional status and the union mentality. As one teacher remarked in Susan Moore Johnson's study, "I think we are getting paid like factory workers because we're always trying to equate ourselves with factory workers."[21]

So institutionalized in the school's culture is the ritual opposition of management and union that many Boston teachers cannot conceive of schools free of this antagonism:

> Like in our system of government, I think everything needs checks and balances. . . . They talk about class size going up next year. I think that's not acceptable. And my building administration thinks that it is acceptable. *Somebody's* got to be there to look at that and decide whether it is or it isn't. There needs to be some system in place. I think that they both go to extremes: the administration says that there should be no union and that it ties their hands. And the union goes to the other extreme and tells us that we must never say anything bad about a fellow union member; it's not our job to evaluate. I don't think anybody should be denied their rights. But if they're doing something blatantly wrong, if they're not providing services to students, I think that needs to be addressed. I think of them as checks and balances; I think that the system can't exist without either one of them.[22]

As this model fails ever more incontrovertibly in Boston, as in other cities, Boston's new school committee and superintendent, and the teachers' union leadership should embrace a new vision for the schools. In this vision, choice and the mechanism of the market, rather than bureaucratic "checks and balances," provide protections to staff and accountability to clients. If teachers reject the conditions of one school and are unable to persuade management of the need for change, they are free to defect. If parents find one school unsatisfactory, they can patronize another.

In the future, teachers must welcome responsibility and take on leadership roles. As Johnson writes,

> Schools must surely be redesigned with, *at least*, these very good teachers in mind. As they gradually change their roles and assume more responsibility for their schools and their profession, teachers will inevitably confront the differences that exist among them, differences that have been politely discounted or downplayed for a long time. There are inherent differences between new and experienced teachers, between skilled and merely competent teachers, between teachers who choose to exert leadership and those who are pleased to be led, between teachers who want to concentrate exclusively on instruction and those who seek educational experiences beyond their classrooms. These differences can be acknowledged and dealt with as schools institute mentoring programs, peer-evaluation plans, school-site councils, differentiated staffing, and career ladders. Without such programs, teachers will continue to be treated as an undifferentiated group, and policies will continue to be devised for the average or least able among them. However, once schools become workplaces where very good teachers can thrive, the distinctions among staff can be put to use. Outstanding teachers can be encouraged to exploit their strengths, working collaboratively with new staff, deliberating about school policy, writing curriculum, and conducting research on school practice. Teachers needing assistance can receive it from mentors, peer evaluators, and team or department members. To redesign the school as a workplace so that very good teachers can succeed is also to ensure that the needs of other teachers are addressed. . . . If public education is to improve and responsibly serve an increasingly complex and diverse student population, it must be staffed by talented and committed teachers. The public cannot expect that those teachers will step forward in sufficient numbers to serve selflessly in schools that discourage their best efforts.[25]

The union/management paradigm, sustained by the destructive assumption of opposed interests rather than the productive recognition of shared purpose, will finally run out of steam. The pressure from the union membership to modernize its agenda will be augmented by a frustrated public. With test scores continuing to decline as education costs soar, the public will perceive the union's current claims of promoting educational quality to be increasingly hollow. When layoff notices are directed to teachers in Boston, seniority and affirmative action goals vie for consideration, but teacher quality is disregarded.[24] Other districts pay higher salaries and benefits to teachers who demonstrate superior skills and achieve better results, but not Boston. As Sidney Smith, headmaster of English High, has written, in this way "we demonstrate that we don't care about quality."[25]

Teachers, too, may press for a more progressive union agenda. Many teachers express a growing frustration with the unions' treatment of teachers thought incompetent both by their peers and administrators. Even though other teachers bear the cost of an unfit teacher, the union has a legal obligation to defend, even if cursorily, the employee from the administration. Nearly everyone interviewed decried the current constraints on responding to ineffective staff. One principal said,

> Some people have left because I wanted them to go. But in that many years, you could count them on one hand. I wanted them to go because I felt they were either dangerous or shouldn't be in charge of my kids. . . . In this particular bureaucracy it's very difficult. I have gone to the third step grievance, to the superintendent—and it's very unpleasant. It's much better if you can get them to want to go. But supposing that you can't. The work that you would have to do to actually sink a teacher—it would take all your time.
>
> One time I had an ineffective teacher and I finally figured out a way to get rid of her and I did. I got rid of her. Very shortly thereafter I was offered [by district administration] the opportunity to create another teaching position. I said, oh sure—you never turn those down. About ten minutes later, personnel called me and told me that *she* had taken the job.
>
> No matter what you do, somebody is protecting that person—that happens. Then you have to find a place on your staff where he will do absolutely the least damage. In other words, you have to fit a program to the person. . . . I had one person who was pretty terrible and I did a whole lot of complaining

> about it. I would have quit, but God stepped in and he died. Failing all of that, you have to find a place; there are enough places in a school this size that you can do that. You wouldn't want to do it more than once a year.[26]

Boston staff spoke of their frustration with the protection not only of grossly incompetent teachers but of those who were simply not pulling their own weight. As one teacher said, "I am a union member and I do think we need a better tool to weed out people who are not good. . . . The union, unless there's something blatant and horrible that the person did, that is clear-cut, will definitely back the person."[27] One principal said,

> When I was a teacher I had my problems with the union. You need some kind of protection as an employee. I understand that; health and welfare is important. Protection of your job is important. There are those that this helps and there are those who abuse it. And unfortunately we've gotten to the point of abuse. Someone who has put in 25, 26, or 27 years isn't entitled to just skate by for the next three until retirement. You have to have more of a business sense. Not what have you done, but what have you done *lately*. That is the key issue the union is not going to give in to. It needs to.[28]

These conflicts will be exacerbated under the entrepreneurial plan, as teachers become leaders, assume managerial accountability, and find their interests increasingly at cross-purposes. If the union now acts consistently to strengthen provider, not consumer interests,[29] how will it act when teachers demand increasing individual autonomy to realize their career goals? When teachers find themselves in conflict with the union's drive for uniformity, prescribed responsibilities, and equal treatment?

Anticipating this, the union leadership will have to choose between opposing the plan because it threatens a very rigid notion of teacher solidarity, and supporting it because it furthers teacher professionalism. Predicting the outcome is difficult. Lieberman and others are pessimistic. As he has argued, a larger union share in decision making is different from a larger teacher share, and the unions often seek to limit teachers' autonomy, not promote it.[30] This reflects an unduly somber world view. First, most people—especially those who have chosen a career in public service—have a genuine desire to do good work and win the admiration of co-workers and society. Teachers are attracted to the profession because of the opportunity to help children and better the world. It is excessively cynical to view as disingenuous their interest in improving the schools.

Second, teachers seek greater autonomy and control over the schools, and their union is sure to respond to the wishes of its dues-paying membership.[31] Teachers will demand flexibility and sacrifice predictability. No longer mere employees, they will question the very rules that now protect them. Working as teams, they will challenge policies requiring, for example, two years to terminate incompetent peers.

Why have teachers not yet pressed the union to update its agenda and support teacher professionalism? For one, of course, unions have won dramatic salary increases in the last decade, just as the talk of professionalism reached its peak. Boston's teachers now enjoy one of the richest urban compensation plans in the nation, including a benefits package that provides medical, dental, and life insurance, psychiatric counseling, workers' compensation, severance pay, paid holidays and the summer off.[32] The average teacher's salary is $43,367 a year. In 1987, *prior* to the increase, in a comparison group of 12 American cities, Boston had the highest average earnings for full-time instructional employees.[33] As importantly, in urban systems like Boston, a teacher is a union member from the first day of teaching to the last. Even administrators, who might otherwise recognize the limitations of the current union culture, are themselves members of the administrators' union, and before that, often were teachers' union members. So entrenched is the current union mentality that even other non-unionized professionals, like doctors and lawyers, assume that teachers require their unions to prevent exploitation. Without the union, they believe, teachers in some schools could be hired at reduced wages and inequities introduced. Ironically, in offering such explanations, these professionals liken teachers to factory workers.

Individual Contracting

Alternatives to current employment practices do exist, alternatives that would offer far more rewarding jobs and increased status to teachers and a new role for Boston's unions. The nation's 600,000 software engineers are not unionized and do not collectively bargain, yet draw similar salaries to teachers today.[34] Each engineer negotiates individually with his prospective manager, even in companies as large as Microsoft and Lotus (3,800 and 1,600 software professionals, respectively). The manager is allowed considerable discretion over compensation, expected hours, and many other terms of employment, allowing him to shape the environment best suited to the program. The candidate is free to consider his own preferences, and to shop for the choice that is right for him. In this way, the right people sort themselves into the right jobs.

An engineer might weigh two employment offers from the same company. The group responsible for engineering enhancements to existing products might offer the candidate a generous salary and reasonable hours. But the advanced development group might hold out the opportunity to work in an elite, high-powered team on the company's next-generation products—at a lower salary and longer hours. Which is the better offer? It depends on the individual's personal preferences and circumstances.

It might be objected that the union is necessary to ensure equal pay for equal work—for the same job. But consider again the software company. As the company grows, engineers within a department may discover that a fellow engineer with similar responsibilities and performance is receiving more pay. While differences in job experiences and salary histories may have justified the original salary offers, the hiring manager will be pressured by his staff to rationalize the pay scale. Annual salary reviews will provide the opportunity for these adjustments and the elimination of inequities. As the organization grows, hiring guidelines are drafted to provide some structure for managers in setting compensation. In a healthy organization and an environment of commitment, it is in everyone's interest to resolve these problems and deter valued members from leaving.

Similarly, individual teachers could negotiate directly with principals over compensation and job responsibilities. The district personnel office would consult with local schools on personnel issues. By contrast, collective bargaining presupposes that all employees value each aspect of employment identically. Individual preferences based on taste or circumstance play no part. Yet clearly teachers evaluate jobs differently. Private school teachers often forego high salaries for a strong culture and an environment that support productive work.

For many Boston teachers today, unionism is a mixed blessing. The union sustains the proud memory of labor activism, the successful organization of teachers in response to systematic abuse. Yet many of the same teachers now quietly question whether they might have been better off without the union:

> Less than 20 years ago teachers were just abused; no health and no welfare. If you were pregnant you couldn't work. If you were female they wouldn't hire you unless you guaranteed that you wouldn't get pregnant within three years. Some of that stuff was mad. Well, they got rid of that, which was good. Now it's just gotten crazy, to be honest. Teachers that need to go, you just can't get rid of.
>
> Someone once told me that when they sat down years ago, if teachers had gone with business cards and not gone union, people would think of the profession a lot more highly today. In other words, "I'm a science teacher; here's my business card." But the schools mistreated teachers to the point that someone convinced them that the necessary thing was to have a union.
>
> There are no real incentives like in business. You want to get treated professionally, like a business person, yet you have this union that holds part of that back—while protecting you very well.[35]

On individual contracting, an administrator commented,

> I can imagine it occurring. If it happens, you obviously would no longer have the teachers' union the way it's thought of now. Which is probably a good thing. But I think that teachers have to become much more professional before that's going to happen. A lot of teachers *are* professional, but there are also too many teachers out there who don't understand what it's all about.[36]

As one headmaster said,

> I feel we should all be on term contracts—where I'm hired for a four-year term, and at the end of the four years my boss can evaluate whether he or she wants me to continue on. Even if a lot of people think I'm the greatest thing since sliced bread, I think that my boss *should* have that kind of authority. I

> should have the same kind of authority over teachers. It is my belief that when you have that type of authority, all the way to the top, you don't have people acting irresponsibly: If my boss got rid of good high school principals and this system of accountability existed, the pressure would be placed on that person from above, because that person's boss could lose *his* job. That is the way things work best, and we don't have any of it. All that needs to change.[37]

Individual contracting at the school site would not increase the cost of labor. In Boston, the personnel department and the Department of Equity (affirmative action) costs $3,689,258 annually. If each of the city's 117 schools budgeted a half-time human resources specialist (responsible for recruitment, benefits management, and employee counseling), the total cost would be $1,755,000. Add $200,000 for a districtwide human resources department, providing a centralized employee database, and the cost would still be only $1,955,000.[38]

Private Practices

A second alternative to collective bargaining is private practice, as recently proposed by Ted Kolderie.[39] A group of teachers could join together to contract their services to one or more schools, just as doctors and other professionals do. The closest analogy is health maintenance organizations (HMOs) and their contracts with medical private practices. Rather than hire staff dermatologists, for example, an HMO contracts with specialists in private practice to provide services over a year's period. Unlike exhaustive collective bargaining agreements, such contracts between an HMO and a partnership of physicians are strikingly brief. The physicians are afforded considerable autonomy because the relationship, unlike that of collective bargaining, provides for corresponding accountability: the contract expires if it is not affirmatively renewed.[40]

To succeed, of course, the teachers' practice would have to offer the school an advantage in contracting out the service. A small school, for the first time, might be able to afford classes in music or art. Another school might be attracted to a practice that, through an innovative pedagogy and computerized instruction, claims exceptional results in math instruction with increased class sizes. No longer would educational improvements be obtained through negotiating concessions.

Whatever the group's "unique selling proposition," the interests of contracted teachers and their client schools would be aligned: The school obtains better instruction for the same cost, and the teachers secure a new client and increased revenues.[41]

A Modernized Teachers' Union

With new opportunities for Boston teachers would come new opportunities for their union. Even skeptics of the market now recognize its strengths. "Certainly the mechanisms of the market offer secure advantages," acknowledged Pope John Paul II in his Encyclical Letter of 1991, "they help to utilize resources better; they promote the exchange of products; above all they give central place to the person's desires and preferences, which in a contract, meet the desires and preferences of another person."[42] The Boston Teachers Union could come to protect the right of teachers to enter into such contracts, rather than constrain it through collective bargaining agreements that limit autonomy and choice for both teachers and principals. Collective bargaining ties the hands of teachers' managers, the principals. District managers, not the principals themselves, negotiate with the unions, yet principals must adhere to the school site practices determined for them. In last minute negotiating, the union often foregoes financial gains for other substantive concessions, to the detriment of principals.[43] Discussing layoffs, one school administrator was angry:

> The Boston teachers' union has never been on the cutting edge of where it needs to be. . . . It could have been creative but chose to be recalcitrant. They did what a traditional union does, which is to protect seniority, but that's all. They refuse to look at anything else. Aiding education is not its primary goal, no matter what they say about it.
>
> I'd much prefer that the union pressed for small class size, which is an economic issue, rather than higher salaries. . . . If they really wanted to make a difference, they would push for educational reform. But they don't—they're another political group.[44]

It is easy to see why, as frustration with the performance of the public schools grows, some have called for the complete elimination of collective bargaining for school staff. Certainly the conception of "community of interest" embodied in the collective bargaining law, Chapter 150E of the Massachusetts General Laws, needs to be reexamined. As the law now provides, all the different employee groups in a school—teachers, custodians, lunch aides, administrators—are recognized as distinct interests and represented by different unions. Each union negotiates with the district separately, resulting in a multitude of contracts, each with disparate terms and conditions. Each contract governs the employment of a single group across the district. As a result, it is nearly impossible for schools to differentiate. For instance, there is surely a demand for schools to operate at night. If this were an option, students would no longer be forced to choose between working and staying in school. Today, this innovation and far more modest changes of program would require waivers from each of the affected bargaining units. Should not the community of interest instead be, as in other industries, the workplace—the school? At the very least, these agreements should be limited by designating certain "management rights" as outside the scope of collective bargaining. Then, the authority of the school's leadership to manage—to write job descriptions, adapt working conditions—and in general, run the school in the best educational interests of its students, could not be bargained away.[45]

The Boston Teachers Union could take the lead in urban education by becoming a professional association like those of doctors, attorneys, accountants, and engineers. If teachers contracted individually, the union could serve as a placement agency. It would represent teachers in finding appropriate teaching positions at attractive compensation and in changing schools and positions. The union could advance the teaching profession by furthering professional development opportunities, improving the stature of teachers, and operating a nationwide job bank. It could educate its members in a newly dynamic profession and its diverse opportunities—in curriculum development, in leadership and school entrepreneurship, and in the application of learning technologies.

Hardware and software engineers and their employers rely on employment agencies. The agencies, themselves knowledgeable of the different disciplines, link the requirements of a job with a pool of engineers with the relevant experience, work habits, and interests. In the high technology industry around Boston, perhaps one-half of all engineers are hired by a placement professional in exchange for a percentage of base compensation. As a placement agency, the new teachers' union would be concerned not only with the status of teachers as a group, but also with their individual needs and career aspirations.

To gain the teachers' and the union's support for the entrepreneurial schools plan, influential teachers and union officials must be involved very early in its development. All parties must have a personal stake in its final design.[46] Teachers and administrators will have strong incentives to work together, but their accord must be pursued on a different track from collective bargaining, where the parties wrestle with permanently adverse interests.[47] Their joint undertaking should aim to improve the way the schools do their work, rather than address the terms and conditions of employment. Rosow and Zager have reported on districts that have experimented with problem-solving processes that are less adversarial and more conciliatory than collective bargaining, and that acknowledge that all sides are committed to educational reform. These programs have succeeded in changing the schools' practices and in obtaining necessary amendments and waivers to union contracts and government regulations.[48]

Teachers can be expected to be divided on the plan for the new schools. Enterprising teachers will welcome the opportunities and responsibilities it bestows; others may feel threatened and resent the ferment it provokes. A survey of Boston teachers, conducted by the Citywide Educational Coalition, found that teachers believe "changes that are vastly more sweeping have to be made to all facets of the system. They want a part in creating and making those changes."[49] Susan Johnson's study found that valued teachers seek "more respect for their opinions and a more decisive role in setting policy."[50] Johnson found that teachers had withdrawn from committee work, were frustrated with politically motivated decisions, and had resorted to informal politics to effect change. Many teachers "would have preferred to participate in an orderly process that consumed less time, sapped less energy, and offered more certain outcomes."[51] The Citywide Educational Coalition concluded, "Teachers suffer from widespread isolation and burnout." Some feel that "the BPS has failed to address any of their professional needs" and that they "must be involved in creating and executing any educational policy." They feel left out of the design and implementation of solutions, and believe that "without their support and cooperation, no policy will succeed."[52] Johnson's study also concluded that the implementors of policy must be its designers.[53] Teachers are already the key policymakers in educational reform: they selectively implement policy.

Clearly, Boston's teachers could never agree on sweeping changes for the entire district. Entrepreneurial schools would put teachers in charge, without risking the district to one program. New schools will require unusual effort and staff collaboration, which will only occur when teachers enjoy working together and social bonds are formed.[54]

One of the most persuasive arguments offered against choice plans is that, because of poor judgment or simple mistakes on the part of parents and educators, some children would be denied even a minimally adequate education. Chapter 6 offers a proposal for avoiding this pitfall.

CHAPTER SIX

The Core Curriculum and Assessment

SOCIETY has a clear interest in ensuring that young people develop the basic skills and knowledge needed to become productive citizens. To our schools we assign this vital task. While most educators accept this charge, in a system of choice the risk is run that some would shirk their responsibility, yet remain popular with a few parents. School choice, then, will require some controls to ensure that a minority of educators and parents cannot undermine this crucial interest of the community. Already we require that children be schooled until age sixteen. We should also establish a minimal set of curricular guidelines and standardized assessments for all schools in the district.

The *ends* of schooling should be distinguished from the *means*, namely, *what* is learned from *how* it is learned. In this design, while schools would have absolute freedom to choose the means of instruction—pedagogy, instructional design, and school culture—an essential set of skills to be taught would be prescribed by the district: the core curriculum. Individual schools could then personalize this base curriculum according to their own purpose by supplementing it with additional curricula.

The Core Curriculum and Assessment

In our increasingly heterogeneous society, one detailed curriculum with something for everyone will end up appealing to no one.[1] It will be said that the domain of knowledge in our ever more complex world has so expanded that any such selection is arbitrary. Some will contend that the minimum curriculum is subject to racial and cultural bias. Still others will argue that the specific content of the core will detract from the proper focus of education, which is to equip children with "meta-skills" that are content-independent, like the ability to learn, compare, and reason. Each argument is, in its best expression, compelling. But as with many social science notions, a brief "reality check" will prevent us from pursuing a good deal of foolishness.

First, our country is in a state of declining economic prowess tied to an eroding technological edge, and in turn to the lack of a well-educated labor force.[2] As Diane Ravitch has written, "[We are] failing to nurture scientists, engineers, and inventors, and, in fact, a general citizenry who can read, write, compute, and adeptly use technology."[3] All endeavors rely on certain core skills, including the ability to read and to speak and write persuasively and accurately. Jim Sleeper has argued that "'there is a new, universal culture enveloping the globe' and . . . Americans of all races are short on the skills that culture expects, whether in mathematics, reading, or geography."[4] These skills have no inherent racial bias. While the so-called meta-skills are important, they are useless unless one can draw on a rich array of general concepts and specific facts from many domains.

The core curriculum is an area where we cannot let buyer preferences dominate decisions, because there are others who legitimately care about the decisions' outcomes. Just as parents do not have free reign to decide what vaccines to give their children because of broader epidemiological considerations, parents cannot entirely decide on students' curriculum. Society, not just parents, has an interest in educational policies.[5] As Henry Levin has argued, "Democratic and capitalist societies must rely heavily upon their schools to provide an education that will preserve and support the fundamental political, social, and economic institutions that comprise those societies and that make it possible to change those societies in a democratic fashion."[6] Abigail Thernstrom also stresses the role of the school in educating children in the civic culture: "American society relies upon its teachers to turn diverse children into citizens, speaking a common language, committed to the American political and economic culture, and prepared to make it work. No other country in the world has opened its doors to so many different people, and none has so successfully integrated immigrant groups into the culture, creating a stable polity."[7]

Public institutions cannot be relieved of the intricate calculus of maximizing social good. The goal is to streamline its realization. Government must continue to debate curricular guidelines and decide which indices of schools' performance should be measured. Entrepreneurial schools will be subject to these guidelines, just as businesses are subject to the legally enforced requirement of maximizing shareholder equity, an arbitrary (based, as it is, on accounting's formal notion of profit) but nonetheless vital social end.

While it will not be easy for Boston to decide on the curricular guidelines, other choice districts have done so. The nation's ninth largest district, San Diego, adopted a core curriculum in 1988 and courses such as technical math, consumer math, and business math were dropped. The district now requires four years each of English, social studies, and math; two years of physical education; two years of science (one of which must be biology); and one and one-half years of fine or practical arts. California recently adopted statewide curricular guidelines in a widely praised process. The new "subject frameworks" were written by an advisory committee of teachers, administrators, and community leaders, its members appointed by the legislature and the state board of education to four-year terms. The committee conducted framework hearings, where interest groups and the public offered input, and political volatility was thereby minimized. Many members of the committee also sit on the development team of an entirely new testing program closely matched to the state's suggested curriculum. In lieu of multiple choice questions, the new "performance-based tests" require students to solve real problems, involving writing, constructing models, and using simple equipment. The new testing program will require training personnel to grade the answers and check the models, according to consistent criteria.

Many highly regarded school districts, like West Hartford, Connecticut, have developed district curricula through standing committees in each subject area. Teachers and department heads applied for the committee positions and were selected by the superintendent for five-year, rotating memberships. An appointment was considered an honor and offered recognition to outstanding staff members. The process created a sense of ownership that curricula developed by high-priced consultants fail to engender.[8] While the task of developing its own curricular guidelines will be demanding, Boston can benefit from the experiences and build on the curricula of other districts. Fortunately, the greater challenge in improving schools has not been to agree on what students should learn, but how.

Assessment

Tests serve many purposes in schools. A single test is sometimes expected to assist teachers in planning instruction, diagnose children's learning problems, direct students to remediation, gate students to subsequent grades, and evaluate both staff and schools.[9] Most educators agree that public school children are today subjected to too many tests, which consume too much valuable class time. Most teachers and many administrators no longer believe in the testing instruments. They administer the tests because they have to.

Many of the charges levied against tests and testing concern their function of distinguishing between individuals who seek employment or admission to an educational institution. As Diane Ravitch has noted, the criticism is ironic since the egalitarianism of testing—versus other considerations that standardized testing has increasingly replaced, like family connections, class, religion, and race—is the basis for its omnipresence.[10] Nonetheless, critics argue that since many people perform well even though they test poorly, one test ought not to be the basis for important decisions about people. Many sources should be consulted, especially "direct evidence of actual performance in school and on the job" including "demonstrating skills, creating products, and supplying portfolios."[11] These issues are not easily resolved.

With one exception, testing is an issue of educational policy and should be left to the management of the new schools. Why, when, and how children will be assessed are integral to a school's educational design and should be set forth in the school's plan, not mandated by the district. The role of assessment and the choice of instruments for four of the five purposes—providing instructional feedback, identifying children's needs, gating children's progression and services, and evaluating staff—are functions of the school's instructional design. The one exception is the assessment of the school's performance. Fortunately, the objections raised above do not apply when testing for the *aggregate* performance of students in a school. In assessing a school's performance, no information about an individual student's results need be released or used for another purpose.

In studies of existing choice plans, parents cite mainly nonacademic reasons for choosing schools: proximity to day care, athletic programs, friends in the schools, and transportation.[12] This finding is discouraging but hardly surprising. If there are few academic differences between the schools, then other characteristics dominate the comparison. To encourage parents to compare the educational strengths of schools, the system should assess the schools' performance in teaching the core curriculum. The results would be published along with certain other objective indices of the school—dropout rates, nonpromotion rates, and so forth—determined by the district's management. *Gains* in outcomes over the year, rather than absolute scores, should be highlighted.

Even so, subjecting the new schools to standardized assessment will spark much controversy, and several of the many now-familiar antitesting arguments will still be heard: First, standardized testing inevitably tests for certain content and skills—and these imprecisely—while ignoring others that may be as important. Second, teachers will teach to the test at the expense of subject mastery. Third, while the goal of the test is to measure the effectiveness of the school, high test scores are also the product of socioeconomic class, parental involvement, and other factors.[13]

Testing, especially machine-coded, multiple choice tests, is today's *bête noir* of the education establishment. A study issued by the Massachusetts Advocacy Center demands that Boston abandon the use of test scores to compare or rank schools:

> Any effort to increase school accountability and assess school improvement must build in a wide range of indicators that reflect the overall objectives of education, including strengthening students' communication and critical thinking skills, enhancing citizenship skills, providing students with an understanding of math and science, and promoting occupational competence. As misleading and narrow measures of overall school effectiveness, test scores alone should never be used in efforts to improve school accountability.[14]

Mass Advocacy claims test scores do not capture what is important in a school's performance, including how "schools educate students with special needs, respond to different learning paces of different students, develop alternatives to nonpromotion, create positive school discipline programs, establish a school climate free of racial prejudice, design approaches to involve parents in their children's learning, foster artistic creativity, or collaborate with human service programs. . . . The contribution such components make to overall educational quality and academic achievement is lost in the equation of higher test scores with better education."[15] The National Commission on Testing and Public Policy contends that machine-graded examinations can only assess a small range of aptitudes and many talents go unrecognized.[16] Lastly, it is said that test scores are distorted by factors unrelated to student achievement. Results may reflect the student's ability to work well under pressure as much as his mastery of subject matter or reading ability.[17]

Tests have also come under attack for encouraging students to "recognize correct answers" rather than construct solutions.[18] Critics assert that educational policies too often emphasize improving students' abilities to take tests rather than to think clearly.[19] The National Commission on Testing and Public Policy concluded that too much classroom time is allocated to testing and test preparation.[20] Recent studies claim to reveal a spectrum of troubling test preparation practices "from the legitimate fostering of testwiseness, through aligning instruction with test content, teaching to the test, teaching the test, testing children with a test meant for those at a lower grade, and exempting low-achieving children from taking the tests, to outright fraud and cheating."[21]

In Boston, there is near universal dissatisfaction among educators with the current standardized tests. Kim Marshall echoed other principals when he said,

> The Metropolitan test results, I don't respect. Because it's not a very good test, and because there are all sorts of distortions that take place. . . . I don't trust the results of other schools who may be cheating on it. The Metro is an all-around cloudy picture.[22]

"Boston's testing schedule," contends the Massachusetts Advocacy Center, "combined with the confusion of standardized test scores with the quality of Boston schools have created a situation that demands that educational and community leaders rethink how student progress is assessed."[23] If their students are to score well on the tests, teachers complain, class time must be diverted from teaching subject matter to "drilling for the test." Rather than designing activities that strengthen students' commitment to learning and show them how to build their own knowledge, the curriculum mandates that information fragments be taught and memorized. No wonder, then, that both teacher and student are bored.[24] The current Curriculum Reference Tests (CRTs) were developed in conjunction with the districtwide curriculum of 1983 and are administered annually to assess mastery of reading and language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign languages, ESL, and computer education.[25] The Citywide Educational Coalition, in a 1988 study, concluded that "many teachers say that testing drives the system." Many teachers (between 50 and 80 percent) "use the objectives mainly because students will be tested on them, not because they are convinced that they contain the most important things students should learn."[26] A disturbing consequence of current tests is that students are rarely exposed to great literature: The reading materials used in class increasingly resemble the brief, artless passages of the tests they will take in the spring.[27] As the authors of *Adolescent Literacy: What Works and Why* wrote about the impact of these passages, "When [students] do read, they are generally given words in isolation or short passages taken out of context; hence these students seldom have the chance to read stories that develop character, plot, or setting . . . nor are they exposed to nonfiction writing of quality and depth. It is no wonder that many lack a basic understanding of the purposes and functions of literacy."[28] The many students who, not surprisingly, flounder at this denatured exercise are relegated to remedial work. Yet they could be challenged to do much more—and would enjoy it more.[29]

Critics of testing also contend that test scores are due only partly to the schools. The effects of social class, aptitude, and other factors are difficult to discern.[30] Critics of standardized tests (like those of the core curricula) have claimed that they reflect cultural biases. The National Commission on Testing, for example, reports that certain Native American groups have implemented education policies wherein among the criteria for identifying gifted children is the ability to daydream.[31] Plainly, daydreaming is not assessed by today's national tests.

In Boston, population differences between the schools complicate absolute ranking of school performance, even with an effective instrument. For one, only some schools have advanced work (AW) classes with selective admissions. When schools have considered dropping AW classes, parents have threatened to withdraw their children. One middle school with sixth grade AW classes was rated third in Boston by test scores. But if the sixth graders' scores were excluded to suppress the contribution of the AW classes, the school would then rank 13th out of 21.[32] As one principal said,

> It's frustrating: Here is a school that has done everything and we still don't do well on standardized tests. The real reason is that Spanish is the native language for 60 percent of my kids. No matter what, these kids don't have the same understanding and vocabulary. So we are so far behind every other school to start with, but they don't look at that.[33]

Of the three objections to testing, the first two are resolved if we agree on a core curriculum that we want all children to master. We have chosen to test for core skills and not others because we regard them to be paramount; if teachers emphasize them in the classroom, all the better. If tests can be developed that measure the material we want children to know, then an alignment of the curricula to the tests is in fact *desirable.* As one headmaster said, "If we knew where we were going and we designed a good assessment instrument or package of instruments, then we could be clear about our mission and clear about whether or not we are getting there."[34]

If the teacher subscribes to the curriculum and the test is of high quality, then the objections vanish. For instance, one teacher of advanced physics told Susan Moore Johnson that he did not mind being constrained by the Advanced Placement exam: "I teach to that test. That's supposed to be very bad, but it's an excellent test. I don't mind that at all."[35]

The last objection to testing, the isolation of school effectiveness from other factors in test results, is a genuine concern, but can be addressed by reporting the comparative *improvement* in test results among schools, rather than the absolute scores. The point of comparison could either be the school's previous year's results, or better still, the results of a like exam taken earlier in the year by the same students. Since the goal of the test is not to allocate opportunities or resources to individual students, but to assess the school through its aggregate results, there is no need to report the absolute scores.

While many educators deride standardized tests, others have already broken conceptual ground and proposed alternative designs. Given the several functions of testing, a design for one purpose is unlikely to suit another. For instance, the Coalition of Essential Schools has urged the use of student portfolios to demonstrate mastery of skills: the work product is one and the same as the testing instrument. Portfolios may be useful in determining eligibility for grade promotion and graduation and gating the opportunities they afford. But without an objective means to evaluate portfolios, they are not useful for contrasting the performance of school populations. Similarly, constraints in one application of testing may not apply to another. A test administered routinely to all students necessitates machine scoring. But to assess schools and hold their management accountable, as urged here, a sample of a school's population can be tested and the economies of automation foregone.[36]

To win the support of educators, new tests for each academic discipline would have to measure the precise skills they seek to teach. As Judah Schwartz has argued, tests must not convey an image of a discipline at odds with its nature, or be simplistic when we wish students to recognize and manage complexity.[37] Consider, for example, two subject areas: elementary school arithmetic and high school history. In mathematics, new instruments should test for the construction of solutions rather than, as today, the recognition of correct answers.[38] Schwartz provides a compelling example. A traditional multiple choice question requires that the student identify the correct answer from four choices to a four-digit subtraction problem. The question tests rote skills. An alternative question would present two subtractions side-by-side, with the answers not yet calculated. The question:

> Here are two subtraction problems. Make up a subtraction problem whose answer lies between the answers to the two problems that are given.[39]

In addition to testing for a conceptual understanding of subtraction, the problem requires the student to create and invent.

As a second example, consider an American history exam. Since the questions contained in standardized tests have generally been held secret by test makers, critics have been restricted to a statistical analysis of test results to substantiate their claims of racial and sexual bias. And in response to such claims by racial minorities, others have been quick to accuse such critics of "shooting the messenger" by identifying purported test defects rather than directing attention to the underlying problem of academic underachievement in communities of color. In lieu of secret tests, Schwartz has proposed a large database of reviewed problems across all subject areas.[40] In American history, the database might contain fifty essay questions on major political figures. In Boston, for example, one question could be chosen each year at random from this category and thoughtfully graded by a team blind to the identity of the school and student. The use of essay rather than multiple choice questions would properly shift the test's emphasis from "decoding" to higher-order or critical thinking skills. With all questions now in the public domain, those claiming bias could for the first time raise a *prima facie* objection. A persuasive claim would result in the question's revision or elimination.

The curricular guidelines and the corresponding database of questions would be closely scrutinized and provide a point of departure for an ongoing public discussion of what we want all students to know.[41]

Teachers accused of "teaching to the test" would take it as a compliment, since preparing for the fifty questions would be synonymous with teaching the material. The contents of the test battery would be worth knowing.[42]

One respected headmaster is already defining new assessments for his school:

> I think that the most important thing that we are now doing is defining the products that we expect kids to produce: the types of things that kids will know and be able to do. In science, for example, all the kids have to write a science paper and have to complete a science project. In English, all of the kids have to write position papers. In math, we have an assessment that we are developing that everyone will have to pass if they want to be promoted or graduate from the high school. We are defining these kinds of products so that, automatically, an English teacher has to be teaching writing more, and the kids have to be writing more in class. Science teachers can't just be lecturing and giving multiple choice tests; they have to be doing projects.[43]

If creating a wave of entrepreneurial activity could, in time, restore excellence to Boston's schools, can the city afford it? Will entrepreneurial schools be more expensive than existing programs? These are the questions taken up in chapter 7.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Budget and Effective Spending

"MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC SCHOOLS are in crisis: a crisis of changing demographics, persistent mediocrity, and elusive educational goals. Most of all, though, it is a crisis of money." So opens a special *Boston Globe* section devoted to education.[1] At a rowdy protest at Boston City Hall, Robert Marshall, president of the Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts, said the educational future of Boston's students is threatened by inadequate funding: The "perpetual underfunding of the school department has created a crisis in the schools."[2] Only with more money, most people would agree, can the school system clean up graffiti-covered walls, replace 20-year-old textbooks, and offer salaries high enough to attract good teachers. Obviously, substantive reform begins with a major new investment in urban schools.

Or does it? Over a 10-year period, from fiscal 1982 to fiscal 1992, Boston's school expenditures (not including external funds) increased every year, rising from $210,534,000 to $386,983,887 in current dollars, a 26.5 percent increase after adjusting for inflation. During the same period, school population dropped by 7.1 percent, from 62,981 to 58,516.[3] Also, contrary to popular perception, at an average salary of $43,367, Boston teachers are no longer grossly underpaid.[4] Staff members agree. As one principal said, "I think the salaries are very good, and I include my own salary in this as well. I know that people would say, when you ask the question, that you should get more. But until people produce more, they shouldn't ask for more, and we're not producing."[5]

With total school spending, including external funds, of $457,869,351, the schools spend on average $7,825 per student. By contrast, tuition at the private Cathedral High School in the South End is $2,150, or 28 percent of Boston's per student spending.[6]

Comparison with Other Cities

How do Boston's schools measure up to those of other cities? Such comparisons are obviously difficult. Even a comparison of "inputs"—the resources devoted to the school—can be misleading. One district's student population may be quite different from the next in racial and ethnic composition, income, education level of parents, family structure, and community influences.

Comparing educational "outputs" is more difficult still. Many comparisons substitute process measures of "units of service," like the number of students served, for a true measure of the school's effectiveness. Unfortunately, the 45 large city school systems that are members of the Council of Great City Schools each annually administer one of seven different standardized tests.[7] Even SAT scores cannot be compared because the segment of each district's high school students taking the test differs markedly from one city to another.

Despite these constraints, table 7-1 compares Boston with 11 large American cities.

TABLE 7-1
COMPARATIVE SPENDING AND STUDENT/TEACHER RATIOS:
BOSTON AND PEER CITIES

City	Total Spending[a]	Instructional Spending[a]	Instructional Spending as % of Total	Student/ Teacher Ratio[b]
	($ per student)			
Atlanta	5,369	2,882	53.7	11.8
Boston	7,656	4,573	59.7	8.8
Cincinnati	5,336	2,901	54.4	12.3
Cleveland	5,879	2,859	48.6	13.1
Denver	4,827	3,236	67.0	12.6
Milwaukee	5,882	3,492	59.4	11.1
New Orleans	3,259	1,925	59.1	15.0
Philadelphia	5,147	2,934	57.0	11.7
Pittsburgh	7,302	3,979	54.5	11.1
Portland	5,519	2,604	47.2	13.2
St. Louis	6,163	3,225	52.3	9.2
Seattle	4,856	2,620	54.0	15.5

[a] Reflects per student current spending from table 17 of *Public Education Finances: 1988-89*, Bureau of the Census. Instructional spending refers to expenses for the instruction function (series 1000) as defined in *Financial Accounting for Local and State School Systems*, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, DC, 1990. Instruction includes the activities dealing directly with interaction between teachers and students. Included are the activities of aides or classroom assistants who assist in instruction. Reflects current instructional spending, including payments from all funds for salaries, employee benefits, supplies, materials, and contractual services for regular, special, and vocational programs offered in both the regular school year and summer school. It excludes support activities (instructional, student and other) as well as adult education, community services, and student enterprise activities, capital outlay, debt service, and interfund transfers.

[b] From *Public Employment: Employment of Major Local Governments*, Vol. 3, No. 1, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1987, 152–175. Instructional staff is full-time equivalent employment, and includes special education, vocational education, and classroom personnel. Cleveland did not submit instructional staff data to Bureau of the Census; ratios from Cleveland Public Schools Annual Report for the school year 1987–88.

While the district's educational quality is widely considered to be undistinguished,[8] Boston's per pupil spending is by far the highest of the 12 cities. In 1988–89, the most recent year for which comparable data are available, Boston's per student spending of $7,656 was 37 percent higher than the average spending of the comparison group.

Does the district spend a lot of money, but little of it on teachers and instruction? Unless many teachers are not actually in the classroom, apparently not: As the table shows, only Denver spent more of its total resources (67.0 percent) on instruction than Boston (59.7 percent). Of Boston's personnel expense, more than 70 percent is for instruction, a higher proportion than any other system. This may be due to the district's very high special education enrollment and mandated smaller class sizes.[9]

TABLE 7-2
COMPARISON OF SCHOOL POPULATIONS

	Total Enrollment	% White	% African-American	% Hispanic	% Asian	% Low-Income
Atlanta	63,502	6.9	91.7	0.7	0.8	74.8
Boston	59,264	24.2	47.9	19.0	8.4	72.9
Cincinnati	51,606	38.2	60.7	0.2	0.8	55.5
Cleveland	72,112	23.5	69.9	5.2	1.1	68.5
Denver	56,476	35.8	22.1	37.5	3.4	39.0
Milwaukee	96,290	31.8	55.0	8.4	2.7	45.7
New Orleans	87,390	7.8	87.4	1.8	3.1	74.0
Philadelphia	191,141	23.5	63.2	9.3	3.9	39.7
Pittsburgh	39,549	46.6	52.0	0.3	1.2	51.5
Portland	53,125	72.1	15.4	2.4	7.5	34.6
St.Louis	44,753	21.7	77.1	0.2	0.9	86.7
Seattle	43,280	46.6	24.3	5.3	20.8	31.7

Source: Council of Great City Schools, Washington, DC, 1990. Demographics are from 1988 and low-income data from 1991.

As table 7-2 shows, in 1991, 72.9 percent of Boston's children were from low-income families and eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches, but three other cities, Atlanta (74.8 percent), New Orleans (74.0 percent), and St.Louis (86.7 percent), had a higher proportion of students from low-income families.

TABLE 7-3
BOSTON'S MAT SCORES
SYSTEMWIDE MEDIAN PERCENTILES
1986–1991

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
READING						
Grade 1	39	56	52	59	54	63
Grade 4	52	55	55	57	53	55
Grade 8	43	48	50	53	48	48
Grade 12	38	38	46	46	41	41
MATHEMATICS						
Grade 1	51	64	64	64	64	71
Grade 4	58	63	60	63	60	63
Grade 8	45	49	49	54	52	49
Grade 12	37	43	45	48	45	48

Source: Office of Research and Development, Department of Educational Testing, Boston Public Schools.

Each year, Boston administers the Metropolitan Achievement Test (developed by the Psychological Corporation, a division of Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich) in grades 1 through 12. While reading and math scores in the first grade have improved over the last six years, the results for grades 4, 8, and 12 show little change over the period. The Metropolitan Achievement Test is revised and renormed approximately every seven years. The national median is set at 50; that is, one-half of a national sample of students taking the test score at or above 50 and the other half below. The year the MAT is revised, scores typically drop, then rise as both teachers and students become more familiar with the test's content and format. Boston's scores dropped on average 10 points in both reading and math from 1985 to 1986, just as they did after the prior revision. The most recent increase in Boston's scores should be interpreted accordingly.

Comparison with similar cities is impossible; few other cities with comparable populations administer the Metropolitan Achievement Test. The four other member schools of the Council of Great City

Schools that administer the test—New York City, Houston, Toledo, and Long Beach, California—all have different student demographics from Boston, test at different times of the year, and include varied proportions of their special and bilingual students. More importantly, only Boston reports MAT results by median scores; all other cities calculate the mean. These differences render the test data incomparable to other cities.

The 1992–93 Budget

Table 7-4 summarizes the projected BPS budget for the 1992–93 school year by category of expense. Salary expense and benefits represent 75.7 percent of the total spending, transportation 6.9 percent, and special education private tuitions (private day and residential placements) 7.7 percent. Together, these three items account for 90.3 percent of the budget, and represent the major opportunities for expense reduction.

TABLE 7-4
BPS BUDGET SUMMARY BY EXPENSE, FY93
(excluding external funds)

Item	Cost ($)	% of Total Spending
Salaries—Teachers		
Regular Education Teachers	80,169,910	21.2
Specialist Teachers	7,075,872	1.9
Kindergarten Teachers	7,032,111	1.9
Special Education Teachers	45,690,944	12.1
Bilingual Teachers	20,546,616	5.4
Vocational Education Teachers	2,786,329	0.7
Psychologists & Counselors	3,241,035	0.9
Substitutes	2,744,043	0.7
Long-term Leaves & Sabbaticals	2,688,195	0.7
Total	171,975,055	45.4
Salaries—Other School Staff		
Librarians	850,841	0.2
Guidance	4,408,101	1.2
Nurses	3,389,137	0.9

Custodians	11,326,786	3.0
Athletic Instructors & Coaches	1,334,261	0.4
Part-time Staff	1,587,142	0.4
Lunch & Bus Monitors	1,835,744	0.5
Aides	9,889,081	2.6
Total	34,621,093	9.1
Salaries—Administrators		
Court Street Administrators	4,956,137	1.3
Zone Office Administrators	462,934	0.1
Elementary School Administrators	6,414,892	1.7
Middle School Administrators	3,305,227	0.9
High School Administrators	5,409,185	1.4
Special School Administrators	864,394	0.2
Other Administrators	381,146	0.1
Evaluation Team Leaders	3,744,104	1.0
Secretarial & Clerical	7,520,664	2.0
Technical Staff	3,564,160	0.9
School Police	1,674,063	0.4
Community Field Coordinators	816,198	0.2
Court Monitors & Compliance Staff	159,203	—
Overtime	61,500	—
Total	39,333,807	10.4
Benefits		
Health & Life Insurance	24,364,601	6.4
Supplementary BTU Benefits[a]	2,884,692	0.8
Unemployment Compensation	2,102,725	0.6
Medicare	1,056,128	0.3
Workers' Compensation	4,074,715	1.1
Pensions & Severance	6,181,422	1.6
Total	40,664,283	10.7
Transportation		
Regular Transportation	13,911,953	3.7
Special Education Transportation	9,948,086	2.6
BPS Vehicles	2,134,530	0.6
Total	25,994,569	6.9
Contracted Special Education		
Tuition and Services	29,117,289	7.7
Administrative Expenses	588,699	0.2
Contracted Services	2,381,213	0.6
Printing & Advertising	2,041,526	0.5

Instructional Supplies	3,749,164	1.0
Other Supplies	470,976	0.1
Utilities	13,811,580	3.6
Repairs and Maintenance	10,718,831	2.8
Facility Rental	53,405	—
Equipment	1,364,116	0.4
Insurance	1,030,000	0.3
Court Orders and Settlements	350,000	0.1
Reserves	20,000	—
Miscellaneous	214,394	0.1
Total	65,911,193	17.4
Combined Total	378,500,000	100.0

Source: FY93 Expense Budget, Budget Department, Boston Public Schools, 24 February 1992.

[a] For each Boston Teachers Union professional (teacher, guidance counselor, or librarian) and para-professional, BPS contributes an amount to a BTU fund for the provision of additional benefits.

The budget can also be summarized by program (table 7-5).

TABLE 7-5
BPS BUDGET SUMMARY BY PROGRAM, FY93
(excluding external funds)

Item[a]	Cost ($)	% of Total Spending
Kindergarten	7,241,415	1.9
Regular Education	86,960,242	23.0
Food Service/Lunch Monitors	1,289,044	0.3
Occupational Education	5,454,249	1.4
Special Education	94,845,357	25.1
Bilingual Education	23,683,275	6.3
Summer Review School	241,982	0.1
Adult Education	475,480	0.1
Elementary School Administration	10,557,917	2.8
Middle School Administration	4,846,795	1.3
High School Administration	6,742,401	1.8
Employee Benefits	40,200,292	10.6
Custodial	13,053,456	3.4
Guidance	3,332,637	0.9
Medical Services	3,677,009	1.0

Transportation	28,298,358	7.5
Facilities and Repairs	27,388,394	7.2
School Committee	188,711	—
Superintendent	381,926	0.1
School-Based Management	69,582	—
Student Support Services	215,951	0.1
Business Manager	3,052,510	0.8
Information Systems	1,780,035	0.5
Management Services	1,978,139	0.5
Curriculum and Instruction	2,025,197	0.5
Implementation	915,292	0.2
School Police	2,150,967	0.6
Zone Administration	1,563,456	0.4
Personnel	3,526,546	0.9
Equal Opportunity	162,712	—
Legal	137,677	—
At-Risk Alternative Programs	2,062,996	0.5
Total	378,500,000	100.0

Source: FY93 Program Budget, Budget Department, Boston Public Schools, 24 February 1992.

[a] Items in table 7-4 with the same label may not match. For example, transportation expense of table 7-4 does not include insurance expense. Guidance expense is higher than the guidance program because some guidance salaries are charged to other programs.

Bureaucratic Control of Spending

Centralized bureaucratic control of school spending is a fundamental impediment to building effective schools. Central administration at Court Street controls virtually all educational spending (aside from external funds), leaving school principals powerless to run their organizations and be held accountable for the results.[10] One principal who used to work at Court Street described the district administration's attitude toward the schools:

> They basically look down upon the schools. And I know that because I experienced it there. The shop talk was, "What do these principals know? How can teachers know this and that?" It's that sort of pecking order that unfortunately was established and is now very, very ingrained. It's always been the history of the Boston schools. So turning it around would be tough—very tough.[11]

No organization can flourish when it lacks the authority and the flexibility to deploy its resources judiciously. As one principal explained,

> The problem is that headmasters and principals have very little authority in terms of personnel matters. If I want to keep this building clean, I can't go out and hire my own custodians. Someone sends me a custodian. Whether or not the guy knows what he is doing, I've got to keep him. If he doesn't do the job, he doesn't do the job: I am stuck with this guy.
>
> I want a Portuguese teacher instead of a bilingual Spanish teacher. Personnel says, "No, you are getting a bilingual Spanish teacher." Why? *I'm* the principal of the school and *I* know what is needed. Well, I want a general science teacher. "Oh, no, you have to take this teacher. She teaches earth science." But that is not in my curriculum. "Well, you have to change your curriculum." I don't have any real choice in a lot of matters like that. I want to get this Xerox machine. "No, we have a contract with this group so you have to get this machine." But a Xerox is more cost-effective in the long run. "Well, that is nice, Mr. ____, but we are making the decision down here and this is what the school is going to use." They will get me *a* Xerox machine and they will get me *a* teacher, but not the ones I would select.
>
> Conversely, the principal of Randolph High [a suburban public school] would be able to pick his own teacher. He would be able to plan his budget and say, "We had $12 million last year and you want me to cut 30 percent. I'll cut 30 percent, but you don't make the decisions." Here [in Boston] they say, "We will cut 30 percent of your budget and this is how it will be cut." That is the frustrating part about working in the Boston public schools. Maybe there is good reason. Maybe principals cannot be trusted with that responsibility. But I say if I'm not doing the job, *get rid of me.* Give me that responsibility to handle a $10 million budget. . . . Parents, teachers, students, business and community representatives, and university people would sit down at a table chaired by the principal and say: Look, people, we've got poor attendance and achievement. . . . How are we going to spend this money?[12]

Principals can overcome some constraints, but only by breaking the rules or by undercutting the zone administrators and lobbying district administrators directly. The best principals become expert at such political games. The process is frustrating and time-consuming:

> I don't mean to say that it is hopeless. I can spend two hours and find a way to see the deputy superintendent and plead my case. But principals and head-

masters shouldn't be spending time trying to overrule the zone superintendent and overrule Budget and Personnel. . . . If any good principal is going to get what he wants, he has to work Court Street. It's like pulling teeth. . .[13]

To illustrate how little discretion is exercised by individual schools, consider how education money is stewarded as one moves from Court Street, to the zone offices and eventually to a typical middle school. In the 1992–93 school year (FY93), the district spending, excluding external funds, is projected to be $378,500,000 with some 58,516 students enrolled.[14] Total per student spending is therefore $6,468. The archetypal school's enrollment is shown in table 7-6.

TABLE 7-6
ARCHETYPAL MIDDLE SCHOOL
ENROLLMENT
(535 Students)

Student Type	Number
Regular Education	340
Bilingual Education	90
Special Education, Pull-out (502.2, 502.3)	60
Special Education, Substantially Separate (502.4, 502.8)	45
Total	535
% Low-Income	72.9

Source: School-Based Management Instructions and Forms of FY93 Budget Process, Budget Office, Boston Public Schools.

To contrast financial control in a district of entrepreneurial schools with the current bureaucratic control of budgeting, two notions are introduced here. First, spending is depicted on a per-student basis. Second, each school's activities are pictured through the statement of revenues and expenses (the equivalent of the for-profit's income statement). For the entrepreneurial schools, the statement underscores the responsibility of each school for raising money as well as for determining how it will be spent. The statement's projected revenues reflect the schools' success in enrolling students under choice and responsibility for ensuring that revenues cover expenses.

District Administration: Court Street

Of the $6,468, $2,435, or 37.6 percent, is expended by Court Street and never makes it into our typical school's budget.

Why is so much money consumed by central administration? First, Court Street's culture of rule following and mistrust is inefficient: Administrators are admonished for not following procedures rather than rewarded for economizing or innovating. To prevent abuses, ever more labyrinthian procedures are instituted, doubling or tripling the administrative cost of otherwise simple functions like hiring a teacher's aide, fixing a broken window, or ordering supplies. Second, the entrenched bureaucratic culture provides few incentives to improve services or lower costs. New practices and technological advances that are quickly exploited in the private sector are only adopted years later in the school system. Third, workers find the moribund workplace so depressing that the district has faint chance of recruiting the ambitious, energetic employees it so urgently needs. One teacher put it succinctly:

> Education is not a business. But in Boston, the parts of it that *should* be run as a business *aren't*, and the parts of it that *shouldn't* be run like a business *are*. Kids are not on an assembly line; they're not something you go into a warehouse for and "take two black six-year-olds and three white six-year-olds and make a first grade." Kids are kids, kids are people, and that part can't be a business. The administration part—the paperwork that needs to be done, the records that need to be kept, the money that needs to flow, the things that need to be bought and sold, and the buildings that have to run—they should be a business, and they're not, which is amazing.[15]

Zone Administration: Another Layer

Of the remaining $4,033 for each student, the zone offices consume only $27, or 0.4 percent of total spending. Intended to decentralize school administration, the zone offices have actually added another layer to the bureaucracy—one that does very little, and in some instances duplicates the functions of Court Street. The management of secondary education epitomizes the problem. *All* the high schools in the city are managed by the oddly designated high school "zone" office, which in turn, is managed by Court Street. The creation of the zone offices resulted in an awkward hybrid management structure, where some essential functions, like personnel and budgeting, have not been decentralized, while others have. The resulting managerial incoherence has duplicated work and exacerbated the system's lack of accountability. As one headmaster explained,

> Central [administration] has directives that go right to the schools, as well as to the zones. Then the zones have to do those directives plus their own initiatives. So in a school you're being pulled two ways: zone and central.[16]

Decentralization has not simplified or down-sized the groaning administrative bureaucracy; from 1984 until today, after the restructuring, only 59 jobs have been lost systemwide.[17]

Many interviewed thought central and zone staff could be much more effectively deployed in the schools:

> It really would be a tremendous savings of money if they closed down the zone office. They have a lot of extra people there, they don't need to be there. And it's a lot of money. Take these people and put them in a school. For instance, the people that do transportation: put them in one of the large schools. They're not doing transportation all day long, so they could perform other functions—not in the classroom, but there are so many other tasks in the schools.[18]

The School

The balance of $4,006 per student, or 61.9 percent of total spending, is ostensibly in the control of the principal. But collective bargaining agreements, entitlement programs, court orders, state and federal regulations, and district policies all have something to say about how this money is spent. To ignore them is to spark a lawsuit.

Like anyone responsible for a budget, the principal should be asking, What must be done to fulfill the school's mission? What staff and expenses will this require? Instead, the principal asks, Have all the rules been satisfied, and what do they tell me that I must spend? Like a child assembling a jigsaw puzzle, the principal may derive a certain satisfaction from fitting together all the rules. But the final picture is predetermined and far from optimal.

SBM gives the principal little more authority. Guided by a worksheet from the budget department, he starts with the students he was assigned, over which he had no control. He divides the number of students by the maximum class sizes—dictated by the teachers' union contract (and by state law in the case of special and bilingual education)—and obtains the number of teachers of each type in his school. Then he multiplies the number of teachers by the *average* teacher's salary (provided by the budget office and dictated by union contracts). Many steps later, he multiplies the per-student allocation for student supplies. In the end, he has discretion over less than 5 percent of his budget.

It would be bad enough if the principal's authority to staff his organization were supplanted by inflexible district formulas. At least such allocations would be "fair." But, in reality, central administration politics and patronage distort the formula's allocations and introduce demoralizing inequities from one school to the next:

> Under zero-based budgeting, guidance, librarian—they're gone. How do you really get these positions restored? I think that a lot of it has to do with the ability of the particular school to finagle and wheel-and-deal and know which buttons to push—not only centrally, but with the school committee people, with whomever. . . . Some schools have one assistant principal, some schools have two, some have none.[19]

In keeping with the culture of rule following, this principal does not suggest that the solution is to control her own budget. Rather, the contractual loophole must be plugged; another provision must be added to the union contract mandating the assignment of assistant principals to elementary schools in proportion to the school's enrollment.

Because mandates control so much of what limited funds make it to the school, several SBM principals complain that the new "school-based budgeting" process is meaningless:

> At an elementary level, all you have are classroom teachers, the principal, the school secretary, the school custodian, and then that's that. And then you have a little money for instructional supplies and materials—and nothing else. I mean that's it. As part of SBM, we all looked at the budget, and people were surprised: "That's all there is? That's the operating budget?"[20]

The principal of our middle school has no say over who attends her school, and no certainty about which teachers work there. She cannot consider the actual salaries of teachers, which prohibits her from considering, as any private sector manager does, whether a staff member is worth his cost, whether the same skills could be obtained less expensively, or whether a more experienced person would be worth an additional expense. The process introduces extraordinary distortions in spending, which the media and the public frequently mistake for an inadequacy of funds.

TABLE 7-7
1991–92 BPS AVERAGE SCHOOL SITE COSTS

Item	Annual Cost ($)
Regular Education Teacher	43,367
Elementary School Principal	61,563
Middle School Principal	62,712
High School Headmaster	64,436
Librarian	45,047
Guidance Counselor	46,364
Instructional Supplies, Elementary School, per student	39
Instructional Supplies, Middle School, per student	44
Instructional Supplies, High School, per student	51

Source: School-Based Management Instructions and Forms for FY93 Budget Process, Budget Office, Boston Public Schools.

For example, the SBM worksheet specifies an average salary of $43,367 for regular education teachers, but an allocation of instructional supplies (textbooks, paper, glue, computer supplies, and so forth) of only $44 per student annually (table 7-7). Each year, the amount allocated for instructional supplies decreases, despite protests from education activists. In 1988, the instructional supply account was $3.7 million; in 1991 it is $2.4 million—a 35 percent decrease over a period when total spending increased by 13 percent.[21]

One reason: the seniority clause of the teachers' contract. As Boston's enrollment has shrunk over the last decade, the seniority clause has dictated that teachers be laid off in reverse order of seniority, without regard to talent, skills, or performance.[22] The result is that Boston schools employ fewer young teachers, and increasingly older—and more expensive—staff.

The teachers' union has pressed for these seniority rules out of fear that the district, left to its own devices, would lay off senior teachers simply to save money. Yet if schools were run like private businesses, the union's fear would be largely unfounded: Free of rigid seniority rules, a healthy organization exhibits a balance of experience and inexperience and a mix of compensation levels. The organization's management prizes both the young and the old: Senior staff members are valued for their experience and judgment and serve as mentors to younger members, whose energy and questioning ways animate the workplace. Each would be less effective without the other. Every year, as some senior members retire, newcomers join the organization.

The principal of our archetypal SBM school has 535 students and a budget of $2,231,113, or $4,170 per student. The school employs 39 teachers (including special and bilingual education staff). In preparing her budget, she must use the nominal salaries provided by the district's budget office (a systemwide average reflecting the current seniority of all staff), not the actual salaries of her own staff members. The sum of her staff's nominal salaries is $1,667,911, and the average salary $42,767.[23] After other salaries are calculated, $44 per student is allocated for instructional supplies per year. It should come as no surprise then, that many Boston schools, despite annual average spending of $7,825 per student (including external funds), have few textbooks and have had to resort to candy sales to raise money to purchase crayons. According to the *Boston Globe*,

> The Boston school system is experiencing a critical shortage of basic materials, ranging from textbooks to dictionaries, that educators and children's activists say is damaging the caliber of education in the city's ailing schools. The lack of supplies is so bad that in some schools an entire class must share two or three textbooks, while in other schools students are not allowed to bring books home because teachers fear they will be lost. The photocopying machine is in constant use in many schools as teachers copy homework for youngsters out of the few available books.[24]

What would have happened if the seniority rules had not distorted the staff composition of our archetypal Boston school? Currently, rookie teachers earn $27,357. Over just seven years, regardless of performance, teachers automatically advance by annual steps to a salary of $39,356, or as much as $48,012, depending on their highest degree earned and accumulated course credits. A full career is about 40 years. Suppose there were an even distribution of teachers by years of experience. Only *one in five* teachers would have been in the system for less than seven years; four out of five would be at the highest salary step. Yet the school's total salary expense would be reduced by $75,192, a substantial sum. This alone would increase the amount of money available for textbooks and instructional supplies in our school from $44 per student each year to $185—a far more acceptable figure.

Of course, the use of nominal salaries and the seniority provision are only two examples of external rules that constrain the principal from spending effectively.

A School's Budget Today

Table 7-8 models the same typical Boston middle school as an organization with its own statement of revenues and expenses. The city's total appropriation for the 1992–93 year (not including external funds) has been pro-rated by the school's share of the district's students. Expenses are grouped according to who controls them—the district office, the zone office, or the school. As the statement shows, the principal has no influence whatsoever over 38 percent of the funds associated with the school's students; they are expended by the district and zone bureaucracies.

TABLE 7-8
A BUREAUCRATICALLY CONTROLLED BOSTON SCHOOL STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE
(excluding external funds)
(535 students)

	$	%
Revenues		
City Appropriations	3,460,549	100.0
Total Revenues	3,460,549	100.0
Expenses		
District Office Expenses[a]		
Transportation	258,726	7.5
School Committee	1,725	—
Superintendent	3,491	0.1
Personnel	32,243	0.9
Equal Opportunity	1,488	—
Legal	1,259	—
Central Administration	64,243	1.9
Curriculum and Instruction	18,516	0.5
School-Based Management	636	—
School Police	19,656	0.6
Facilities Management & Repair	250,407	7.2
Employee Benefits	367,543	10.6
Implementation	8,368	0.2
Contracted Special Education	266,213	7.7
Miscellaneous	8,275	0.2
Total	1,302,789	37.6
Zone Office Expenses	14,294	0.4
Total	14,294	0.4
School's Budgeted Expenses		
Salaries		
Regular Education Teachers	1,127,542	32.6
Special Education Teachers, Resource Room	86,552	2.5
Special Education Teachers, Separate	209,395	6.1
Special Education Aides	40,249	1.2
Bilingual Education Teachers	244,422	7.1
Guidance	46,364	1.3

Administration	171,470	5.0
Clerical	24,958	0.7
Library	12,460	0.4
Custodians	117,880	3.4
Substitutes	37,752	1.1
Athletics	882	—
Instructional Supplies	23,540	0.7
Total	2,143,466	61.9
Total Expenses	3,460,549	100.0
Difference Between Revenues and Expenses	0	0
Fund Balance at Beginning of Year	0	0
Fund Balance at End of Year	0	0

Sources: District and Zone Office Expenses: FY93 Program Budget, Budget Department, Boston Public Schools, 24 February 1992. School Budget Expenses: School-Based Management Instructions and Forms of FY93 Budget Process, Budget Department, Boston Public Schools. All amounts are pro-rated for the school's 535 students.

[a] The categorization of expenses by Court Street, zone, and school reflect who controls these funds. It does not mean that, for example, zone office expenses are inessential to the school's operation.

An Entrepreneurial School

"It's so demoralizing when you work this hard to try to do a good job," principal Bob Martin explained, "and one office says, 'Oh, we have to cut three teachers even though you need them, and oh, we have to do this, that, and the other.' Then after the school year begins, money comes from somewhere and 'Oh, we can restore the positions,' but then another office doesn't let you go back and get the three good teachers you had to cut."[25] What would happen if true budgetary authority—and accountability—were vested with the entrepreneurial schools' executive directors—their principals? How would this make resources available to advance each school's distinctive mission?

In the proposed entrepreneurial schools, nearly all district funds would be controlled by the executive directors. The only exceptions would be money for central district functions such as transportation, the superintendent's office, the leadership academy, and assessment. Today, principals have so little real fiscal authority that they cannot even be held accountable for costs. By contrast, the entrepreneurial schools would operate as what accountants call *profit centers,* with the executive director held responsible for revenues as well as expenses. Most functions currently provided by Court Street, including food, custodial, and delivery services and staff recruitment, would be the responsibility of individual schools, which would have the option to purchase them from Court Street. Establishment of transfer prices to the schools would impose a market discipline on both central administration and the schools, resulting in more prudent consumption.[26] Schools would be free to purchase services from private contractors. As one principal said,

> We're not allowed to choose the custodians who come in and work in our building. What I would like is to be able to have the freedom to take that salary that the custodian gets and to contract out to a cleaning company to come in and, even if they came in just twice a week to take the trash, I'm sure my building would be much cleaner than it is the way the system is set up now.[27]

With Court Street no longer the sole source of products and services, competition would increase quality and lower costs. If Court Street's departments failed to compete effectively, they would go out of business.

Consider the operation of a school under the proposed entrepreneurial schools plan. What might a new school look like? How would it exploit its new budgetary and managerial authority? Table 7-9 shows the hypothetical Beacon Middle School, intended as just one example of an entrepreneurial school. Following the work of James Comer in New Haven, the school perceives the social, family, and economic circumstances of its inner-city, primarily low-income students outside the classroom as inseparable from their academic achievement within the school.[28] A clinical team of two psychologists, a social worker, two guidance counselors, a nurse, and a parent liaison work together with classroom teachers to ensure, first, that children receive appropriate diagnostic services and therapy within the school, and second, that students and parents access health and social services outside the school.

TABLE 7-9
THE BEACON SCHOOL
A HYPOTHETICAL ENTREPRENEURIAL SCHOOL
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE
(excluding external funds)
(535 students)

	$	%
Revenues		
Funding by Capitation		
Regular Education ($4,630 per student; 430 students)	1,990,900	65.0
Special Needs, Pull-out ($6,630 per student; 60 students)	397,800	13.0
Special Needs, Substantially Separate ($7,630 per student; 45 students)	343,350	11.2
Limited English Proficiency Supplements ($500 per student; 90 students)	45,000	1.5
Low-Income Supplements ($500 per student; 390 students)	195,000	6.3
Total	2,972,050	96.7
Gifts (External Funds)	100,000	3.3
Total Revenues	3,072,050	100.0
Expenses		
Salaries		
Regular, Bilingual, and Special Education Teachers[a]	1,592,719	51.8
Aides (3)	40,249	1.3
Special Education Director (half-time)	20,000	0.6
Psychologists (2)	60,000	1.9
Therapists[b]	30,000	1.0
Social Worker	30,000	1.0
Guidance Counselors (2)	80,000	2.6
Nurse (half-time)	19,937	0.6
Parent Liaison (half-time)	13,000	0.4
Librarian	45,047	1.5
Library Aide	12,460	0.4

Executive Director	62,712	2.0
Curriculum Director	45,000	1.5
Business Director	45,000	1.5
Human Resources Director (half-time)	15,000	0.5
Development Director (half-time)	15,000	0.5
Purchasing Director (half-time)	25,000	0.8
Clerical	25,000	0.8
Total	2,176,124	71.0
Benefits[c]	292,955	9.5
Substitutes[d]	20,330	0.7
Instructional Supplies ($150/student)	80,250	2.6
Instructional Equipment ($100/student)	53,500	1.7
Medical Services	2,260	0.1
Athletics Expenditures ($50/student)	26,750	0.9
Extracurricular Expenditures ($35/student)	18,725	0.6
Staff Development	39,818	1.3
Contracted Information Services	15,000	0.5
Utilities[e]	82,530	2.7
Contracted Custodial Services	121,555	4.0
Alterations and Repairs	100,000	3.3
Contracted Legal Services	4,280	0.1
Total Expenses	3,034,077	99.0
Difference Between Revenues and Expenses	37,973	1.2
Fund Balance at Beginning of Year	0	0
Fund Balance at End of Year	37,973	1.2

Source: Student enrollment: table 7-6; Capitation schedule: table 5-2; Expenses: see notes below. It is important to understand that this table does not represent a "typical" school: There is no typical entrepreneurial school. Every school will organize differently to respond to the needs of its students and to advance its mission. One school, for instance, might emphasize small classes and choose to hire many teachers. Another might invest heavily in computers and instructional media to enhance the efforts of a smaller faculty.

[a] The positions might be allocated as follows: English (5), Science (2), Reading (4), Spanish (1), Music (1), Health Education (1), Industrial Arts (1), Physical Education (2), Special Education (5), Mathematics (4), History (4), French (1), Art (1), Computer Education (1), Home Economics (1), Electronics (1), Bilingual, Spanish (4).

[b] $30,000 is provided for part-time occupational, physical, and speech therapists.

[c] Calculated as follows:

Item	Number of Employees (FTE)	$ per Employee	Subtotal ($)
Health	57.7[•] x 90% = 52	3,600	187,200
BTU Supplement[†]	57.7 x 90% = 52	483	25,116
Unemployment Compensation[‡]			9,434
Medicare Payments[§]			8,630
Pensions[□]			39,314
Injury Payments[#]			23,261
Total			292,955

[•] Not all employees participate in any organization's health plan. Blue Cross, at $3,600, is the most expensive of the various current BPS plans. Full-time equivalents: 39 teachers, 1 SPED director, 0.7 therapists, 2 guidance counselors, 0.5 liaison, 1 library aide, 1 curriculum director, 0.5 human resources director, 1 purchasing director, 3 aides, 2 psychologists, 1 social worker, 0.5 nurse, 1 librarian, 1 executive director, 1 business director, 0.5 development director, 1 clerical. Total: 57.7 FTE.

[†] There is a different BTU rate for teachers than for aides. An average rate for all staff is $483.

[‡] Unemployment compensation is budgeted at $1,084,920 for the district in FY92.

[§] Medicare payments are 1.45 percent of salary for all employees hired after 1986.

[□] Pensions are budgeted at $4,521,062 for FY92.

[#] Injury payments are budgeted at $2,675,047 in FY92.

[d] Budgeted at $38 per pupil x 535 pupils = $20,330.

[e] Includes heat, electricity, telephone, water, and sewer expenses.

For the purpose of comparison, the total funds expended on instructional staff (teachers and aides) are the same as in the bureaucratically controlled school modeled in table 7-8. This school's executive director, however, has the flexibility to establish job descriptions and responsibilities, compensation levels, and classroom assignments as he sees fit to fulfill the needs of the children. To lessen the isolation of teaching, encourage mainstreaming, and increase teachers' support for one another, the school is based on the cluster model. Five clusters of some 100 students each are taught by teams of regular and special education teachers and aides.

In bureaucratically controlled schools the principal has no authority over or ownership of special education programs. Much of the evaluation team leaders' (ETLs) and special education staff's time is spent on the elaborate student evaluations and reevaluations prescribed by state regulations, leaving too little time to deliver services. In the Beacon School, the special education staff—teachers, aides, psychologists, and therapists—are an integral part of the school's team and work alongside regular education teachers to address the needs of *all* the students in the cluster. Instead of an ETL, the school has hired a half-time special education director, reporting to the executive director. At last, the school's leadership has responsibility for the performance of all its students.

Many of the students who would be referred to special education in a dysfunctional urban school are accommodated in the regular classroom. (See chapter 8 for a full discussion of special education.) Regular education has been restored: the school culture is healthy, staff morale is high, students are engaged. This is a school that staff and students all feel is special. As a result, there are far fewer discipline problems, fewer students interrupting the learning of others, and fewer students cognitively outcast from the mainstream. For those who do require special attention and services, the special needs teachers are in the classroom, working in partnership with the regular education teachers.

In addition to the executive director and the special education director, the management team includes a curriculum director, a business director, a half-time human resources director, and a half-time development director. Relocating administrative functions from the district office to the school has many advantages. Functions that require elaborate and rigid bureaucratic procedures to fulfill at the district office—ordering classroom supplies, hiring an employee, contracting for a service—are, at the school site, stripped of their complexity. They are also less costly. Most decisions are now made at the school, enhancing the subscription of staff, parents, and students to the school's mission. Responsibility for the school's curriculum and pedagogy also rests with the school, and the curriculum director works with the teaching staff to implement both the core curriculum and the school's own curricular extensions.

Boston's teachers currently enjoy generous benefits, including a choice of health plans, eye care, dental care, and psychiatric and counseling services. All current benefits are sustained in the hypothetical Beacon School budget. Moreover, they are extended to *all* of the school's 57 employees, including administrative and clerical staff, and aides. The budget assumes that 90 percent of staff will participate in the school health and supplemental benefit plans.

In private organizations, in-service staff development and training reinvigorate staff with new ideas and restore convictions. In the Boston schools today, there are essentially no funds for staff development. Beacon has chosen to budget an amount equal to 2.5 percent of total teacher salaries for staff development, which the executive director and the staff are free to spend as they see fit—whether to attend conferences, pay for outside consultants, or reimburse tuition. Even after paying for this very generous staffing, the entrepreneurial school has enough money left for rich per-student allocations for instructional supplies ($150 per student), instructional equipment ($100 per student), athletics ($50 per student), and extracurricular expenses ($35 per student).

Beacon has chosen to contract out certain functions. Court Street's strong information systems and budget departments have successfully set up shop selling their services back to the schools. Computer services, such as scheduling, keeping track of grades, course enrollment and pupil data; documenting individual education plans for special education students; accounting; and budgeting; are contracted back to Court Street. A private vendor, however, provides custodial services. The school has budgeted this service at the same cost as the bureaucratically controlled school's pro-rated piece of Boston's total custodial budget. The executive director has set aside money for legal services, equal to the pro-rated portion of Court Street's historical legal costs. Since relations between teachers and the school are no longer based on the adversarial model, the environment is far less litigious. Administration and staff thus expect to have most of this money to spend on something productive at year's end.

The school has set aside $100,000 for alterations and repairs to the building, furniture, school yards, and windows. The first order of business will be the removal of graffiti and litter from the school grounds. The staff has vowed to remove graffiti as soon as it appears, removing the incentive for gang members to deface the school. The appearance of the building and its grounds will reflect the aggressive pride of the new school's community.

The District Office Budget

What would the budget of the restructured district office look like? Consider table 7-10.

TABLE 7-10
RESTRUCTURED DISTRICT OFFICE
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES
AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE
(excluding external funds)

	$	%
Revenues		
City Appropriations	378,500,000	100.0
Total Revenues	378,500,000	100.0
Expenses		
District Office Expenses		
Transportation	23,609,451	6.2
Total	23,609,451	6.2
Core Curriculum[a]	333,333	0.1
School Assessment	500,000	0.1
Total	833,333	0.2
Entrepreneurial Schools		
Program Administration[b]	300,000	0.1
Leadership Academy	200,000	0.1
Seed Grants[c]	3,250,000	0.9
Total	3,750,000	1.0
School Choice		
Administration[d]	681,117	0.2
Parent Information Centers	1,750,000	0.5
Total	2,431,117	0.6
Special Education		
Private School Tuitions	26,205,560	6.9
Total	26,205,560	6.9
Central Administration		
School Committee	60,000	—

Superintendent	381,926	0.1
Central Administration	1,000,000	0.3
General Counsel	50,000	—
Total	1,491,926	0.4
Private Industry Council Support	600,000	0.2
Total	600,000	0.2
Total District Office Expenses	58,921,387	15.6
Funding to Schools by Capitation		
Regular Education	214,581,275	56.7
Special Needs (Pull-out)	41,764,162	11.0
Special Needs (Substantially Separate)	37,434,176	9.9
LEP Supplements	4,823,000	1.3
Low-Income Supplements	20,976,000	5.5
Total Funds to Schools	319,578,613	84.4
Total Expenses	378,500,000	100.0
Difference Between Revenues and Expenses	0	0
Fund Balance at Beginning of Year	0	0
Fund Balance at End of Year	0	0

Sources: For District office expenses, see tables 7-11 and 7-12. For capitation schedule, see table 5-2.

[a] The core curriculum is expected to cost $1 million to develop over three years.

[b] This office would administer grants, assist the sponsoring councils, allocate space for the new schools, and provide a liaison to the new schools' management.

[c] To complete the tranformation of Boston's schools in five years, some 65 one-year seed grants would be awarded each year. If each seed grant is for $50,000, total annual cost during this period would be $3,250,000.

[d] School choice administration includes the language assessment office, whose function is to determine whether a child is LEP (Limited English Proficiency) and eligible for bilingual programs.

The district performs only those functions that must be fulfilled centrally, including transportation, the annual school assessment, the leadership academy, and the office of the superintendent. The remaining funds, 84.4 percent of the total revenues, are available to the schools in direct proportion to the number of students each school enrolls. (Other functions may continue to operate out of Court Street, but only if the individual schools elect to purchase products or services from the district. These expenditures are therefore not reflected in the statement.)

Requirements for Successful School-Based Budgeting

The authority of entrepreneurial schools over spending would be far greater than that of "school-based budgeting" (SBB), which has been used in school districts around the nation. Still, the experience of these districts with SBB is instructive. The Albuquerque Public Schools surveyed participants in 33 schools after their first year of school-based budgeting. As in Boston under the first year of school-based management, some participants in Albuquerque perceived SBB as a public relations ploy by the district, a "way to shift blame for cuts and discarded programs or staff to the schools."[29] If Court Street bows to pressures to retain many of its current functions, the per-student funds granted to the new schools would be reduced. If the resources controlled by the new schools are not substantially greater than the current schools' budgets prepared by Court Street, the spirit of enterprise will be compromised by the perception of declining resources. Albuquerque participants urged that the allocation be changed to a per-student basis. The revenues allocated to the new schools must be strictly based on enrollment; any vestiges of political discretion will poison morale and give rise to charges of inequity. Finally, authority for budgeting must not be excessively compromised by state laws or district regulations that mandate how money is spent. As one Albuquerque respondent said, "They say we can make our own decisions, but this is actually not true. . . . Our budget is handed to us."[30]

But even if Court Street were to allow schools to determine their own budgets, Massachusetts' purchasing law, Chapter 30B, may prevent them from doing so. Intended as a reform measure, Chapter 30B did lower the dollar threshold at which purchases have to be formally bid. While the law may function well for a town of average size, in a city as large as Boston, it *increases* the complexity of the purchasing process. The law identifies a "chief procurement officer" for the city, who must review contracts from every city department.

Any purchase begins as a conversation between two people, someone who needs something and a vendor willing to provide it. Ideally, the transaction can then be completed. But consider the purchasing process in the school district. First, a requisition must be written, identifying three vendors. After the requisition is signed by the "responsibility center," it reaches the Court Street business department. It is routed to the contracts department, and then back to the chosen vendor, where multiple signatures must be obtained. Then it is sent back to the business department, where it collects further paperwork. It then goes to the city law department, and on to the city auditor. Next, it is sent to the state finance commission, and then to the mayor, who must sign it. Finally, it returns to the district's contracts office, and then to the vendor. If the vendor is still interested in doing business (some six weeks later), he calls the school. Even small purchases for school supplies like chalk or crayons that, by 30B's provisions, would not be subject to such a cumbersome process, are "aggregated" by the business department with similar requisitions of other schools and ensnared in this absurd process. Obviously, the more complex the procedure, the greater the number of administrators who must be employed by the business department and the city.

Consider, by contrast, how the Department of External Funds allows schools to buy goods and services. Since individual schools cannot receive gifts directly (other than in-kind donations), External Funds has created a nonprofit corporation that funnels private gifts through the schools and operates free of bureaucratic snares. Each school is assigned a separate account. Once a decision is reached in a school to buy something, say a VCR, the school can simply send someone to Sears to buy it the same day. The purchaser can either give the foundation's bookkeeper (part-time, paid entirely out of the accounts' interest) a receipt and be reimbursed within the week or ask her to cut a check in advance for the exact amount of the purchase. Initially, the state's school improvement funds (Chapter 188 and 727, reform initiatives of the eighties) flowed through the foundation, but the business department later declared that these funds were subject to 30B's provisions. Today, less than 0.1 percent of the school district's funds flow through the streamlined process.

Arguably, the city could delegate the chief procurement officer's authority to the school department, and in turn to the individual schools. The law neither calls for not prohibits such a delegation. But Court

Street's business department and city's counsel have both found it in their interest not to provide schools with such responsibility.

Lawyers will object that schools cannot be left to enter into contracts without central oversight. Each contracts binds the city and creates potential liabilities. But this is a technical problem to which there are ready legal solutions. It is hard to see, as a practical matter, how most of the small transactions—for supplies, for consultants, for in-service training—create a risk for the city.

It is disingenuous for the legislature to call for "school site management," knowing full well that the schools are not free to hire staff (under Chapter 150E) nor to purchase anything (under Chapter 30B). The law should be revised to explicitly provide for the delegation of procurement authority to individual schools—at least for certain types of contracts. Furthermore, simple inventory checks, ensuring that goods paid for out of city funds were in fact received by the schools, would be less elaborate and less costly to implement than the current bureaucratic controls on process, yet would prevent abuses.

In Britain, all the country's high schools and an increasing number of elementary schools are managing their own budgets. The program, known as "local management," began in 1988 and will include all schools by 1994. Under the plan, the district must turn over 85 percent of its budget to the schools, to be spent on teaching staff, psychologists, social workers, meals, maintenance, the library, and other expenses as their administrations see fit. The schools may hire and fire staff, and are responsible for devising their own programs for children with disabilities. At the Bishopshalt School in Hillingdon, just two administrators now oversee activities—meals, cleaning, insurance, and investing the school's $4 million budget—that were formerly performed by a lumbering district bureaucracy. Teacher training and other services too costly to staff at the school are purchased from the district.[31] Susan Chira of the *New York Times* found that "although the new responsibilities are considerable and at times overwhelming, most principals say they would never go back." As one head teacher, Jane Traies of the Swakeleys School in East London, told Chira, "You have control over your own destiny."[32]

A Restructured District Office

To allow the formation of entrepreneurial schools, the district office must be radically reduced and restructured. District administration is currently housed in a large building on Court Street, in the heart of the expensive financial district. Inside, the building is decrepit and depressing, with vast, half-empty floors, rows of vacant desks, scarred furniture, and legions of unhappy faces. The physical environment reflects a culture of resignation and hopelessness. The district should ask the city to sell the building and move its remaining functions to a much smaller facility, an attractive but inexpensive office that could symbolize a new beginning for the Boston public schools. The city's proceeds from the sale could be used to fund a transition account from which early retirement incentives could be paid to employees ultimately unable to participate in the new entrepreneurial schools. Alternatively, the Court Street building could be renovated in conjunction with a private developer and a small section of the vast floor space leased back to the district at a token expense.

The new facility would house several new or expanded functions, including the administration of the school choice plan. Some functions, like transportation, would be down-sized and cost-reduced. Others, such as the watchdog Department of Equity, would become obsolete and be eliminated. The vast majority of Court Street's current functions would be delegated to the schools.

New or Expanded District Functions

Can the city afford to launch the new entrepreneurial schools? Table 7-11 summarizes what it would cost the district. The development of the core curriculum and the school assessment instrument will be the district's single largest expense. San Diego's core curriculum, initiated in 1989–90, cost the district approximately $1.5 million a year, including the cost of implementation at the school sites.[33] Boston should begin by reviewing existing core curricula, including San Diego's, to minimize costs and avoid duplicative effort. The cost to Boston's schools is estimated at $1 million.

TABLE 7-11
NEW OR EXPANDED DISTRICT FUNCTIONS

Item	Cost ($)
One-time District Costs	
Development of Core Curriculum[a]	1,000,000
Development of School Assessment Instrument and Sampling Guidelines[b]	10,000,000
Total	11,000,000
Annual District Costs	
Annual School Assessment	500,000
Leadership Academy	200,000
Seed Grants	3,250,000
Parent Information Centers	1,750,000
Program Administration	300,000
Total	6,000,000

Source: Author calculations.

[a] Developed over a three-year period.

[b] Not a BPS expense. Externally funded from U.S. Department of Education, major foundations, or corporations.

A new school assessment instrument and sampling criteria, as proposed in chapter 6, should be developed in tandem with the core curriculum. For each topic of the core curriculum, several essay questions would naturally follow, from which a database of questions for each grade level would be compiled. The development of this database, along with exemplary essays and accompanying guidelines for scoring, is a prodigious undertaking. But with not only the approach but specific content adaptable to other cities, the project could attract grant funding from the federal Department of Education, major foundations, and corporations concerned with improving American education. Harvard's Educational Technology Center, on whose innovative testing proposals these recommendations are based, could be a candidate to lead a program to develop the new instrument, at an estimated cost of $10 million.

Since the new testing instrument would be administered only in the district's entrepreneurial schools, the cost of testing would increase over time as new schools were launched. When all students were enrolled in entrepreneurial schools, every school would be sampled. Not all students need be tested, however. If 5,000 of the district's some 58,000 students were tested, the assessment, including test grading, might cost the district $500,000 annually.[34] The results would be disseminated to the parent information centers, independent organizations, and the media.

The leadership academy would assist those developing plans in evaluating instructional programs and products, contacting potential collaborators and staff members, attracting corporate or university partners, and securing external funding. A full-time staff of three (including the academy's director) would organize regular seminars with guest speakers, maintain a library of current educational research, and compile a list of volunteers, local educators, and funding sources. The academy would cost $200,000 annually.

The new secondary schools, many housed as schools-within-schools, would be much smaller than today's large high schools. If all students are to be enrolled in the new schools within five years, and if there are about 125 such schools, about 25 new schools would be launched each year. Since not all seed proposals are financed, 65 one-year seed grants would likely be awarded each year. Each grant would be for $50,000. The total annual cost of seed grants during this period is then $3,250,000.

Choice is only equitable if all parents have the means to make informed choices. Boston must resolve, as nearby Cambridge has, to ensure that they do. Under the direct supervision of a new central parent information coordinator, the district should retain only the most capable PIC staff and set demanding standards for new recruits. Based on Cambridge's per-parent-decision information cost, Boston's PICs are projected to cost $1.75 million per year.

Members of the sponsoring councils—business and community leaders, academics, educators—would volunteer their time. A program administration budget of $300,000 would support the councils' development of a guide for preparing school plans; a full-time assistant to the councils to coordinate meetings and the receipt, distribution, and review of plans; and other costs of restructuring the district for entrepreneurial schools.

Down-Sized and Cost-Reduced District Functions

A team of researchers at Northeastern University released a report in 1991 entitled, *Boston Public Schools: An Assessment of Governance, Operations, and Finance*. The following discussion is partly based on their findings.

In the entrepreneurial schools proposal, most of the district office's current functions would be transferred to the school site. As one principal observed,

> Above the zone level, the administrative levels of BPS have been very disappointing and unproductive—not helpful to the schools. And I think almost any principal in Boston will tell you that about the central office folks, about the school committee. I was in the [district] curriculum department so I can really understand. I *felt* it was very important. I felt I was working hard, and I was. But our school system is so large that no matter how hard you work, you can't have the direct impact on the school that you can have if you are at the school level. So the criticism that is directed at these levels is on target, is correct.[35]

TABLE 7-12
DOWN-SIZED AND COST-REDUCED DISTRICT FUNCTIONS

Item	Cost ($)
Transportation	
Regular Education	17,665,541
Special Education	12,919,142
Total Costs[a]	30,584,683
Less:	
Reduce Door-to-Door Special Ed. Transportation	1,639,800
Change from 3 to 6 Zones	1,766,554
Eliminate Busing for Racial Balance	1,766,554
Improve and Freeze Regular Education Busing	802,324
Self-Insure Fleet	1,000,000
Total Savings	6,975,232
Total New Transportation	23,609,451

Special Education Private School Tuitions	
Total Costs	29,117,289
Less:	
Private School Tuitions Saved	2,911,729
Total Savings	2,911,729
Total New Private School Tuitions	26,205,560
School Choice Administration	
Total Costs	915,292
Less:	
Eliminate Office of External Liaison	234,175
Total Savings	234,175
Total New School Choice Administration	681,117
Central Administration	
School Committee	188,711
Office of the Superintendent	381,926
Central Administrative Staff	7,026,635
Office of the General Counsel	137,677
Total Costs	7,734,949
Less:	
Eliminate School Committee Staff	128,711
Central Administrative Staff Reductions	6,026,635
Reduce Office of the General Counsel	87,677
Total Savings	6,243,023
Total New Central Administration	1,491,926

Sources: FY93 Program and Expense Budgets, Budget Department, Boston Public Schools, 24 February 1992; *The Boston Public Schools: An Assessment of Governance, Operations, and Finance,* Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts, 1991.

[a] Amounts differ from table 7-5. Reflects cost reductions taken subsequent to 24 February 1992 version of FY93 budget.

Transportation

The current BPS transportation program is unusually inefficient. The state inspector general's office considers it one of the worst contracts it has examined, a "model of how not to privatize."[36] The district owns the bus fleet but contracts with an independent company, In-City Boston Management (ICBM), to operate the buses. ICBM submits for reimbursement virtually all of its costs, from salaries to office supplies, yet receives an additional management fee of some $1.34 million.[37] The company has no incentive to economize and improve performance since its profit is guaranteed. Furthermore, some critics allege that ICBM has awarded lucrative subcontracts for bus yards and body work to favored vendors, even though the city spends about $200,000 a year for accountants and auditors to review ICBM's invoices.[38]

Boston's transportation cost is much higher than in comparable cities in Massachusetts and other states.[39] At $13.53 an hour, Boston's bus drivers are among the highest paid in the country.[40] In the fall of 1991, they went on strike, unsuccessfully demanding another 14 percent pay increase. Instead, they received a one-time bonus. Federal authorities have launched an investigation into the awarding and administration of the district's school bus contracts.

TABLE 7-13
COMPARISON OF SCHOOL BUS COSTS WITH OTHER CITIES

City	Number of Students Bused	Cost per Student ($)	Provision
Kansas City	21,000	1,109	Private Contractor
Boston	39,676	827	Owns Buses, hires manager
Baltimore	30,000	759	Reg. Ed.—Private, Spec. Ed.—Public
San Francisco	11,800	678	Private
St. Louis	15,690	669	Reg. Ed.—Private, Spec. Ed.—Public
Madison, Wis.	5,010	649	Private
New York	590,000	637	Private
Seattle	20,975	603	Private
Indianapolis	25,398	592	Public
Denver	19,700	587	Public
Pittsburgh	31,220	564	Private
Cincinnati	42,596	371	Private

Source: Brian C. Mooney, "Bus Costs Ride an Upward Spiral," *Boston Globe*, 21 May 1991.

In most BPS programs, responsibility is so diffuse that no one is accountable for waste and high costs. The transportation system epitomizes the problem. Negotiation of wages for some 750 drivers are "contracted out" to a firm that has no incentive to minimize costs. Labor expense is passed through to the district. The transportation director of the BPS concedes that the work force is very expensive, but says that there is nothing he can do about it. If he were to hire non-union drivers, he would lose the investment BPS has already made in training the current ones, and the new drivers would likely organize in short order and demand wages and working conditions identical to those of the current drivers.[41] Moreover, the transportation director does not have the authority to make such a decision:

> I'm merely stating the fact that our driver work force is very expensive when compared with similar drivers throughout both the state and the country. That's a fact. In terms of changing that, that's not my decision . . . whether it should be unionized or non-unionized or anything else. . . . It would be a school committee decision.[42]

The major opportunities to reduce transportation expense are to reduce door-to-door special education transportation, to create more and smaller zones and limit choice to within them, to lift racial quotas, optimize routing, and self-insure the bus fleet. Many children with special needs receive door-to-door transportation at district expense even though they have no disability requiring it. The BPS has begun to secure parental permission to return these children to regular buses. Most recently, letters have been mailed to the parents of 911 students; if one half accept regular transportation, an estimated $1,639,800 would be saved.

Currently parents can choose (subject to racial controls) an elementary or middle school within a zone one-third the size of the city, and the school pays for transportation to this school. By changing from three to six zones, transportation costs would be reduced. Parents would still be able to choose from about 12 elementary schools; as schools-within-schools were created with distinctive programs, this number would increase. Smaller zones would also make it easier for schools to foster parental involvement. As one teacher said,

> I would like to see community schools, not because I'm against busing—I really would like to see schools be racially balanced—but I think you eliminate the community involvement. We've got parents that don't drive cars. We say, "Come to a meeting," and they say, "How? I live an hour and a half away. I'm not coming up to that school."[43]

While it is difficult to project the savings from this change, the Northeastern study conservatively estimates a 10 percent reduction, or $1,766,544, in the cost of regular education busing. Further savings would result from eliminating the grandfather clause in the controlled choice plan, which allows certain students to attend schools outside their zones.

If racial quotas were lifted under true school choice, and if good schools were available in all neighborhoods, it is likely that more parents would elect to send their children to schools closer to home. A conservative estimate is that an additional savings of 10 percent of current costs, or $1,766,554, of busing expenses could be realized. Many of the existing bus routes are inefficient; large elementary school buses, for example, have an average occupancy of only 56 percent of capacity, and some carry only a few students.[44] A software package for bus routing has recently been implemented. By further optimizing routes using this tool and no longer modifying routes and schedules after the beginning of the academic year, the Northeastern study estimates savings of at least $802,324. Further savings are possible by increasing the distance older students walk to their bus stops, which for many is now less than a quarter of a mile. Self-insuring the bus fleet would also reduce costs. The BPS transportation function is complex enough to constitute a risk pool. Allowing for administration, legal expenses, and claims, the Northeastern team estimates savings of $1 million.

In total, savings of $6,975,232 of current transportation expenses may be possible.

Special Education Private School Placements

Out-of-district placements of special education children in private day or residential programs currently cost the district $29,117,289. This number is decreasing as Boston creates appropriate settings for these children within the schools. In the short term, the Northeastern team estimated in 1991 that if 5 percent of these children were returned from private placements to substantially separate classrooms with additional staff and materials, the net savings would be $1.1 million.[45] Five percent is a conservative goal; if 10 percent of these children could be returned to the schools, the district could save $2,911,729 at current costs.

School Choice Administration

The Department of Implementation is currently responsible for student assignments and for evaluating students for bilingual programs. To reflect the department's new mission of fulfilling parents' choices for schools, rather than implementing court-ordered desegregation mandates, the department's name would be changed to the School Choice Department. The department currently has responsibility for the Office of External Liaison, which monitors and disseminates information on desegregation. In keeping with Northeastern's recommendations, this office would be eliminated for a savings of $234,175 from the total budget.

Central Administration

Central administration would consist of the office of the school committee, office of the superintendent, central administration staff, and the office of the general counsel. Until the new elected school committee took office in January 1992, the school committee's personal staff cost over $500,000 a year, and reflected a long-standing misconception of the committee's role. As the board of directors of the school system, the committee should set policy; hire and fire the CEO, the superintendent; and obtain financial and other resources for the district. Parental concerns should be handled by the parent information centers and by liaisons in the individual schools, not by the committee. An office of the school committee, staffed by an administrative assistant, would be budgeted at $60,000. The budget of the office of the superintendent would be unchanged.

Many observers of the schools assume much of the district office's spending is lost to inefficiency, incompetence, or corruption. Undoubtedly, some Court Street staff members perform their jobs poorly, but the larger problem is not the people but their job descriptions. Most Court Street staff members do not work for the school system, but for the state, the courts, or the city. Their days are spent diligently fulfilling the mandates that people outside the system—often with good intentions—have imposed on the schools. As varied as these interventions are, each shares the assumption that public employees cannot be trusted to do the right thing unless every detail of their jobs is prescribed from outside. With choice, market accountability would replace this misguided bureaucratic accountability. Only a small central administrative staff would remain, at a budget of $1 million.

Currently legal matters are handled by Court Street's Office of the General Counsel. In a program of choice, each entrepreneurial school would budget separately for legal services as required. The current central budget of $137,677 would be reduced to $50,000.

Eliminated District Functions

Several district functions would be eliminated in the restructuring, as shown in table 7-14.

TABLE 7-14
ELIMINATED DISTRICT FUNCTIONS

Item	Cost ($)
Zone Administration	1,563,456
School-Based Management Office	69,582
Equity Office	162,712
Total Estimated Costs	1,795,750

Source: FY93 Program Budget, Budget Office, Boston Public Schools, 24 February 1992.

The establishment of three zones and one citywide high school zone, at a cost of $1,563,456 annually, has not decentralized the administration of the schools. In its new role as enabler of the entrepreneurial schools, the district office would centralize its remaining functions. The zone offices would be closed and their budgets eliminated. The district would open a parent information center for each of the six new zones. While decentralization to the individual schools is imperative, SBM is misconceived and the central SBM office should be dismantled. The

Department of Equity spends $162,712 a year and should be closed. Responsibility for recruiting a racially diverse staff is properly the responsibility of each school.

District Functions Delegated to the Schools

Funding for all other programs currently managed by Court Street would be disbursed to the schools. All funds formerly directed to regular education program accounts, including administration, would be allocated to the schools.

The current organizational structure of special education may contribute to excessive referrals, and certainly creates needless expense. In a restructuring similar to that proposed by Northeastern University, the ETLs would be eliminated and replaced by full-time special education directors at the school site. Based on Northeastern's estimates, if all schools adopted this restructuring, $1,975,000 would be freed for other purposes within the schools.[46]

The trend in the delivery of special education is toward a model in which each service specialist works closely with the regular education teachers to provide needed services in the classroom. Northeastern's audit suggests that caseloads under the consultative model could increase from 35 students per specialist to 50. Currently contracted specialized services cost $3 million. If all schools adopted this approach, the 16 new therapists would cost $842,000. Based on Northeastern's estimates, $1.96 million would be saved.[47]

The researchers at Northeastern have noted that the software used by BPS to keep track of individual education plans (IEPs) could be upgraded to provide for the direct construction and entry of IEP goals as they are conceived during team meetings, rather than requiring centralized translation and entry of the plans by 10 clerks, as is currently done. Whether done by personal computer at each school, or through a central system under contract from individual schools, an improved information system would free up over $250,000.[48]

The Northeastern study found that 2,000, or 28 percent, of bilingual students remain in transitional bilingual education past the three-year limit. In other communities, only 5 to 10 percent remain after the limit.[49] Based on the current cost per student difference between regular education and bilingual education, Northeastern identifies possible savings of $760,000 if only 10 percent stayed in bilingual programs beyond three years. This money would be freed for regular education programs.[50]

Hundreds of studies have attempted to model the school as a production function, where the "output" of education, student achievement, is related to certain "inputs," including money, class size, the skill level of teachers, and so forth. Eric Hanushek has analyzed 187 studies of the educational production function. Taken as a whole, he concludes that "there is no strong or systematic relationship between school expenditures and student performance."[51]

Educational research has confirmed what we know from common sense: there are dramatic differences in the average gains in student achievement from one teacher to another, and from one school to the next, after adjusting for differences in family backgrounds and initial scores. But the existing surrogate measures of teacher and school quality, including teacher education, level of experience and compensation, and class size bear no systematic relationship to student performance. On the other hand, several studies have found that principals' evaluations of teachers were strongly correlated with their effectiveness, as measured by the adjusted means of their students' achievement gains.[52]

As Hanushek notes, the policy implications are dramatic. Since legislatures and the courts cannot directly manage the schools, they have found dictating school expenditures and other inputs to be the obvious policy instrument. But efforts to improve educational outcomes by controlling inputs—increasing per-student spending, mandating small class sizes, and elevating teachers' educational requirements—are likely to continue to prove disappointing. As Hanushek writes, "Expenditure increases, if undertaken within the current institutional structure, are likely to be dissipated on reduced class sizes or indiscriminate raises in teacher salaries, with a result that growth in costs will almost surely exceed growth in student performance."[53] He concludes,

> Why is there so little pressure for efficient operation of our schools? What incentives will help schools increase their effectiveness? Can the institutional structure be altered to facilitate improved [school] performance? Answering

these questions will be key in the long-run improvement of our system of education.[54]

Would the new schools benefit from additional funds? Certainly. At Bob Martin's school, the Bank of Boston's generous grants for computer technology have helped propel the school to the top of the district in test scores.[55] But investing additional monies in too many of the district's failing schools is throwing good money after bad. What other organization falls prey to such illogic? Foundations do not award grants to the social service organizations with the poorest record of fulfilling their mission. Donors do not write checks to charitable institutions that squander the bulk of their money on overhead expense and deliver few benefits to their clients. Investors do not commit new capital, hoping against hope, to insolvent corporations.

No responsible investor would invest in an organization with the profit and loss statement of table 7-8. Tables 7-9 and 7-10 present a very different picture: In these organizations, more money will be put to good use. As an increasing share of the city's students are enrolled in the new schools, as tax dollars are more productively deployed, and as the investment pays dividends in higher levels of student achievement, the public will show a new willingness to fund public education.

Strengthening regular education will require freeing resources from bilingual and special education, which each year consume a still greater share of district funds. These mandated programs are the subject of the next chapters.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Special Education

CHAPTER 766 OF THE ACTS OF 1972, Massachusetts' special education law, remains a landmark in education legislation. The law's fundamental proscription, that no child, regardless of disability, may be rejected as ineducable, was a great step forward in civic sensitivity. Its guarantee to all children with disabilities—whether physical, cognitive, or emotional—of an education providing "maximum possible development in the least restrictive environment" has enabled children to obtain services that they might otherwise have been denied. The same year the legislature adopted 766, the state deinstitutionalized many retarded and otherwise disabled young people, resulting in a sweeping transfer of responsibility (and cost) to the schools. Three years after Chapter 766 was enacted, the U.S. Congress passed P. L. 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, modeled closely on the Commonwealth's seminal legislation.

But Chapter 766 and P. L. 94-142 are also the most prescriptive education laws ever adopted. Judith Singer and John Butler characterized the federal statute as "a high water mark in federal attempts to standardize compliance with educational legislation."[1] The law purports to tell educators not only where to go, but how to get there.[2]

To minimize the exercise of discretion by providers and administrators, the state law sets forth an elaborate sequence of steps for identifying a special needs child and drafting his or her individual education plan. Each of the 10 steps for identifying and enrolling children in special education—including prereferral, needs assessment, plan development, and the commencement of services—is precisely described in the law's accompanying regulations. Exactly who must participate in each step and the maximum number of days that may pass between each are prescribed.

The portion of the school day that each child spends in a special education program depends on the child's individual plan. The programs are classified into eight main *prototypes* (502.1 through 502.8), defined by the amount of time the child spends outside the regular classroom. The law further surrounds this machinery with an elaborate due-process system permitting the parents to appeal the school's decisions—in essence, to obtain the education of their choice. With 83 pages of regulations, Chapter 766 is the last word in the bureaucratization of the schools, what one expert has called the "attempt to reduce implicit understandings to explicit undertakings."[3]

The disabling paradigms of the city schools—the focus on compliance with process rather than the quality of outcomes, the debilitating prescriptions of external authorities, and the environment of institutionalized distrust—have hobbled urban education. In special education, they find their fullest expression. Chapter 766 is a caricature of the dysfunctional practices of public education.

Since the legislation was passed two decades ago, the special education population nationally has doubled. In 1968 approximately 2.3 million special education students were enrolled in the nation's schools; by 1990 there were nearly 4.7 million.[4] The number of special education teachers increased accordingly: More than 100,000 were hired nationwide in the last 15 years.[5] Special education is the second largest program administered by the U. S. Department of Education.

While Massachusetts' overall school enrollment has fallen by nearly 20 percent over the last decade, the number of students in special education has grown. As a percentage of the school-age population, Massachusetts has the highest special education enrollment of any state.[6]

2.6

The Commonwealth's Chapter 766 programs served 17.1 percent of public school children in 1990;[7] nationally, only 11.5 percent of public school students were in special education.[8] More disturbing still is the extent to which Massachusetts segregates children with special needs from those in regular education. Private school special education placements (502.5 and 502.6 prototypes) in Massachusetts decreased from 1980 to 1989, while enrollment in substantially separate 502.4 programs increased by 44 percent over the same period.[9] Children in the 502.4 prototype now spend significantly less time with their regular education classmates than they did a decade ago: In 1980, 75.5 percent of the average pupil's class time was spent in separate classrooms; by 1990 this proportion had increased to 90.3 percent.[10]

Throughout the state, officials, educators, and parents are alarmed at the extraordinary growth in enrollment and cost of the special education program. The situation is the most serious in Boston, where 22.9 percent of the district's children are enrolled in special education, nearly twice the national average.[11] Some Boston administrators contend this percentage is misleading: The city's private and parochial schools do not provide special education, so the correct denominator is not the BPS enrollment of 58,516, but the total city enrollment, public and private—71,000 children. In fact, however, the city's parochial schools enroll in regular programs most of the students Boston would label as "special needs"; only children with severe disabilities that the schools are not equipped to accommodate are refused. Moreover, since other large cities also have substantial private school populations and these private schools are presumably no more likely than Boston's to accommodate children with disabilities, it remains to be explained why Boston's special education percentage, no matter how one chooses to calculate it, is so high. Most troubling of all is the dramatic growth in the number of Boston students removed from the regular classroom and confined to segregated programs. Many of these students have neither physical handicaps nor identifiable neurological conditions. In disproportionate numbers, they are children of color: African-American and Hispanic students, for example, are overrepresented in 502.3 programs, the most restrictive of the mainstream prototypes.[12] In effect, special education is resegregating the city's

2.7

classrooms by race and ethnicity. Once enrolled, special needs students face slim odds of rejoining their peers in the regular classroom. Thirty-nine percent will not graduate high school.[13]

TABLE 8-1
GROWTH OF SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENT IN BOSTON

Year	Total District Enrollment	Special Education Enrollment	% of Total Enrollment
1970–71	96,696	8,172	8.4
1975–76	84,988	8,915	10.5
1980–81	67,953	12,220	18.0
1985–86	61,020	14,495	23.7
1990–91	60,543	13,341	22.0

Sources: October Reports, Massachusetts Department of Education; Special Education Department, Boston Public Schools, 11 March 1992.

TABLE 8-2
GROWTH OF RESTRICTIVE PROTOTYPE ENROLLMENT
(502.4 through 502.6)

Year	Total District Enrollment	Restrictive Prototype Enrollment	% of Total Enrollment
1980–81	67,953	3,954	5.8
1985–86	61,020	5,602	9.2
1990–91	60,543	6,400	10.6

Sources: October Reports, Massachusetts Department of Education; Special Education Department, Boston Public Schools, 11 March 1992.

The increasing special needs of Boston's children are partly rooted in the worsening social and health problems of the city's urban poor. Each year, more children from homeless families arrive at the school door with educational problems stemming from malnutrition, erratic attendance, and the trauma of shelter life. Maternal substance abuse also extracts a heavy toll on both the health of newborns and the home lives of young children. Contributing to the increase in special education is the growing number of abused and neglected children and children with chronic medical needs who, a decade ago, might not have survived. AIDS, family fragmentation, urban violence, and cultural and linguistic barriers all further contribute to the educational needs of Boston's children.

Yet even all these factors combined do not fully account for the unparalleled growth in Boston's special education enrollment over the last decade. The U.S. Department of Education estimates that one child in eight is in need of special education;[14] the Boston schools identify nearly one in four, a higher proportion than any other large urban district in the nation. While the incidence of clinically verifiable special needs of urban children will vary somewhat from one large city to the next, there is no reason to expect Boston to have a substantially greater incidence than, say, New York City. Yet in 1989, Boston identified 22 percent of its students as having special needs, and New York only 11.3 percent. Differences in state policy explain only part of this discrepancy: Enrollment in other large Massachusetts cities is also consistently lower than in Boston. While Boston had 21.2 percent of its students in special education in 1988, Lawrence had 14.1 percent, Worcester 17.5 percent, and Springfield only 13.3 percent, though all are subject to the same provisions of state law.[15]

Staffing has expanded along with enrollment. Since 1984, Boston's special education staff has increased by 33 percent.[16] The district now employs 933 full-time equivalent special education teachers, 143 professionals providing related services, 98 evaluation team leaders, 419 contracted staff, and 57 guidance and pupil adjustment counselors, for a total of 1,650 staff members.[17] Boston also has far more special education administrators than other cities—one for every 96 special needs students, versus 324 in New York and 1,454 in Miami.[18]

The United States now spends more on the education of the handicapped than most European countries, and imposes more controls from outside the schools.[19] Massachusetts law requires an even greater financial commitment than most other states. Thus, costs for special education in Massachusetts have skyrocketed. From 1980 to 1989, total annual expenditures rose from $266.9 million to $739.5 million in current dollars, an increase of 177 percent.[20] Seventy-five percent of that increase occurred in the last five years. In one year, from 1988 to 1989, total special education expense in the Commonwealth increased (in current dollars) by 23.3 percent.[21] Spending for the most restrictive prototypes, in which students are enrolled in private day (502.5) and residential (502.6) programs, also soared. Tuition rates for private residential schools, paid by the district, can run as much as $130,000 per student annually. In 1989–90, there were 996 students in such schools at a cost of $63.9 million, a fourfold increase from a decade earlier.[22] Even though the Boston Office of Special Education is reducing the number of students placed in these private schools, the costs continue to rise. In 1990–91, Boston spent $121.7 million, or 30 percent of the district's budget, to educate 13,000 special needs children.[23] Of this amount, $25.2 million was spent on day and residential private school tuitions.[24]

Just as Chapter 766 enrollment varies sharply from community to community, so do costs per FTE (full-time equivalent) student. In 1989, Boston spent $17,411 per FTE pupil, substantially more than Lowell, New Bedford, Springfield, and Worcester. Lawrence spent only $8,367.[25] A comparison of three Massachusetts communities with similar socioeconomic indicators (demographics, unemployment rates, and poverty levels) found large differences in the proportion of children served by special education, the distribution of services, and the average special needs teacher's salary.[26]

Twenty years ago, the legislature enacted Chapter 766 with the best of intentions. Hundreds of thousands of children have benefited from its mandates. But special education is consuming an ever greater portion of the education budget in Boston and many other communities, jeopardizing the schooling of students in regular education. If these trends are to be arrested, we must begin by reexamining the fundamental assumptions of Massachusetts' special education law.

The Chapter 766 Model

Chapter 766 brought many children with physical disabilities, mental retardation, autism, and other severe learning problems into Boston's classrooms for the first time. Many have been well served by the services the law mandates. Therapists, nurses, and counselors are available at no charge to children who need them. Special needs students also benefit from smaller classes.

Despite nearly two decades of providing these services, Boston remains out of compliance with Chapter 766's regulations. A recent, highly critical study of Boston's 766 programs, by the Arthur D. Little consulting firm, focused on administrative failings in the district office in achieving compliance.[27] Although the report offered sensible recommendations for improving the program, many of which are discussed in this chapter, Court Street administration was quick to reject the study and declare its proposals unfeasible.

The consultants' fixes alone will not curtail enrollment and cost increases or ensure compliance. Boston's problems are rooted in the law's underlying philosophy. Chapter 766 leaves virtually no discretion in the hands of local schools. Every step, from the student's initial referral to his annual reevaluation, is dictated and scheduled by state law. The regulations specify the composition of an elaborate team of specialists—psychologists, social workers, audiologists, physicians—who evaluate each child. The scope and structure of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) the team prepares is specified by law. Every year—or whenever the parent requests—the team must prepare a new individualized plan.

The approximately 17,000 separate evaluations in Boston each year require coordinating the schedules of specialists, parents, and teachers. On average, 435 meetings must be held per week, each no later than 30 days after the parents consent to a referral. Within this period the school must arrange for the compilation of a battery of assessments of each of the 435 children.[28] Once the IEP is prepared, the district has eight days to translate it into the student's native language. No wonder, then, that a recent study found that evaluations and paperwork can take up to 15 percent of special education teachers' time—time they could spend in the classroom.[29]

With such onerous requirements, it is hardly surprising that Boston is out of compliance with the law and has been under court supervision for 16 years. In 1976, the Massachusetts Advocacy Center, representing parents of special needs children, filed suit against the district.[30] The case, ***Allen v. McDonough***, has spurred six separate court orders. Hounded by the court, Boston's special education department must focus entirely on procedure, at the expense of children's education and development. The current special education director explains how the department gauges its success:

> Compliance with the court orders is probably the biggest measure. . . . The mission is to ensure that every kid has an IEP, that it's implemented, and that we complied with Chapter 766's regulations as well as Public Law 94-142. . . . The court says that for all the team meetings that we have to conduct, we have to do it within the timelines in 95 percent of all cases. To put that in perspective, we conduct 17,000 team meetings each year. To expect that we're going to do it on time, and that no one is ever going to misstep. . .[31]

While the district is close to compliance on initial evaluations, it is far from meeting the law's requirement for the timely initiation of services once evaluation is completed. Since administrative time is sapped by attempting to improve compliance, administrators know nearly nothing about the quality of service students receive once enrolled.

The regulations stipulate that the IEP should document, along with 21 other plan components, the

> general (1 year) educational objectives and the specific (quarterly) objectives which the children can reasonably be expected to achieve. Such objectives shall be measurable and shall be listed in order of priority.[32]

Of course, the department has no time to analyze the plans to determine whether the measurable goals were achieved. Elliot Feldman, the current director of special education, stated that to the best of his knowledge, no administrator had *ever* looked at the plans' outcomes.[33] Without studying these outcomes there is no way to know what works, and no way to improve education and other services for children with special needs. Nor can the school system know whether, in the end, children are learning anything. These questions go unasked. Instead, administrators focus on reporting to the court such things as whether more IEPs were translated on time this month than last month.

Frank Torres, the court's independent monitor in *Allen v. McDonough*, was charged not with ensuring educational progress but with counting the number of overdue referrals and evaluations, IEPs not implemented, and IEPs not provided to parents within ten days. Torres believed that "teaching is a slimy profession" made up of people who are "not trustworthy" and "couldn't compete anywhere else." He viewed the 766 regulations as a "roadmap that must be followed religiously" and regarded the court's response as a public repudiation of the idea that "educators know what is best and . . . act in the best interest of students."[34] In 1985 Bonnie Hausman wrote,

> According to Mr. Torres, the regulatory environment is one of guerilla warfare in which his task is "to set up ambushes" where he traps enemies in the act of violation. He believes that an effective advocate "must be comfortable with global indictments" and with charges such as "You are evil!" "Good advocates," he says, "are crazy people who make gross generalizations and who believe there are bad people in the world who make bad things happen."[35]

The court has relied on quantifiable, bureaucratic measures of 766's progress. Compliance with the court's dictates will ensure only that IEPs are produced by BPS computers, and that parents are brought in to sign them. It will not ensure that the law is substantively fulfilled—that the IEP guides instruction, that parents are involved in the design of their children's schooling, and that children are prepared for a return to the regular classroom.[36]

The staff has become consumed by process. Each member works to attain his or her particular measurement, since that is what is rewarded, but no one feels responsible for educational results. Feldman concedes that the focus is misplaced:

> Attention should be focused on the *qualitative* aspects of what we're delivering. But everything always comes down to the court case. We have a group called the Special Needs Advisory Council, which the court set up. We also have a court monitor, and we have Mass Advocacy, which represents the special needs parents in the city of Boston. They believe that to give up on any one of those areas is to water down the regulations. They, I would assume,

> equate watering down the regulations with delivering lesser quality services. That's not the reality, but that's the perception.[37]

When the district fails to attain the unrealistic compliance quotas, aggressive advocates invoke the district's noncompliance in appeals hearings to demand private school placements, at enormous public cost. According to Feldman,

> [The focus on compliance] sometimes misses the mission, which is quality services for students. Meeting a 30-day deadline does not equate with getting a student a quality service. . . . If we don't adhere to those very strict timelines, then they're used against us in mediation, when an advocate is seeking placement outside of the Boston public schools that winds up costing us $32,000.[38]

The legislators who drafted the law thought by prescribing and enforcing every detail of service delivery, they would ensure that little could go wrong and no recalcitrant provider could cause the system's failure. Twenty years later, they have succeeded only in ensuring that very little goes right.

Borrowing from the strategy of the civil rights movement, advocates for the handicapped obtained the entitlements of Chapter 766 through the courts and the rhetoric of rights. Indeed, the militant spirit that fueled their struggle today pervades the law's implementation in the schools. Chapter 766 introduced the language of rights, adversarial proceedings, and due process into an area that, for good reason, previously had relied on "the professional discretion of teachers, psychologists, and school administrators."[39]

The due process hearings for which the law provides were intended to prevent the exclusion of students from special education services. But as Shep Melnick has noted, such hearings are also available to those wishing to challenge the appropriateness of their children's instruction. Parents may demand a hearing on whether an instructional plan provides "maximum feasible benefit," cost notwithstanding.[40] Parents of regular education students have no such due process rights. If they did, given the state of the public schools today, there would be a great many angry parents demanding their rights.

Some experts have speculated that the law could be successfully challenged in court. Imagine the parents of two children bringing a case before the state: one child is benefiting from the best possible education under the special needs law, while his sibling, a gifted child, is languishing from mediocre instruction in a regular classroom. Is it equitable under the Constitution's equal protection clause to place children with disabilities in a preferred position?

Since Chapter 766 is an entitlement program, costs cannot be taken into consideration in determining a child's placement and program. Even during the current fiscal crisis, money is no object. The state's standard of "maximum feasible benefit" drives up the program's cost, penalizing children in regular education programs that must suffer deep cuts.

The cost-blind mandate is counterproductive. As any business person knows, the effective administration of a program requires ongoing assessment of performance versus price. One judge has ruled that federal special education law does not create "a right for parents to write a prescription for an ideal education for their children and to have the prescription filled at public expense."[41] Most federal judges, however, have taken a very "expansive and expensive" view of communities' obligations.[42] In *Armstrong v. Kline,* the Third Circuit held that the limit of 180 school days per year did not apply to students with disabilities, since special needs children regress more during the summer than children in regular education.[43] The Supreme Court upheld this decision in 1981. In 1982, John Pittenger estimated that this decision alone could cost districts nationwide $830 million annually for the year-round education of children with certain types of disabilities.[44]

Unlike the federal law, which identifies particular physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities, Chapter 766 eschews categorization. The intent was to prevent the child's stigmatization and discourage teachers from basing instruction on diagnostic labels. But this prohibition against categorizing disabilities deprives special education administrators of crucial information they could use to evaluate and refine educational practices. After 20 years of experience, and nearly $8 billion spent in the last decade alone, the state has no information on performance and no way of replicating best demonstrated practices.[45]

Which instructional and therapeutic interventions were most effective for which children? The state is barred by law from knowing.

The prohibition against categorization also creates ambiguity in eligibility criteria. The law assumes that all students with behavioral problems are handicapped. If a student is not promoted at the end of the year, fails two or more required classes, is suspended for more than five days within a quarter, or is absent without a medical excuse for more than 15 days within a quarter, the regulations state that the principal shall refer the student to special education or notify the parents in writing of their right to such a referral.[46] In short, eligibility is determined by the failure to progress in regular education, rather than the presence of a disability. Principals interviewed believe too many children are referred:

> They're referred for trivial reasons. There are no brakes on it at all. What it comes down to is that if a teacher does not like a child, or isn't working well with that child, that child is automatically recommended for special ed placement. And that's not fair. During my time at Court Street, I visited all the schools as part of my job. What I saw in special ed classrooms was children wallowing. They were talked down to. There were very low standards. I've seen children copying from dictionaries when they were capable of much more.[47]

Feldman praises the 766 statute for its "all-encompassing" nature, but then concedes that the law leads to over-referral:

> It opens the door for too many kids to be identified. It does not have any entry or exit criteria. Anybody can make a referral, anybody can say they believe that this kid needs to be referred for special education. And they go through a whole battery of tests. One of the upsides to 766 is that we don't just label students emotionally disturbed, mentally retarded—this law allows *anyone* to become part of the special needs population. It becomes problematic because we tend to over-identify special needs students who could be served in the regular population.[48]

To be sure, defining and distinguishing between emotional and behavior disorders, mild retardation, and minor learning disabilities are difficult. But exempting Massachusetts from this responsibility has resulted in an ever-increasing number of special education referrals and due process hearings.

When lobbying for the legislation, special interest groups demanded that the schools not only be obligated to further the child's intellectual growth but to deliver a sweeping array of medical and psychological services as well.[49] The law, therefore, extended the role of the school well beyond education. Special education expanded to include medical services (including catheterization, medicating, and tube feeding) for children with physical incapacities.[50] Even routine services like occupational and physical therapy are only marginally related to the school's educational mission.

The ideology of special education advocates is based on a fundamental contradiction: Special needs children are said to have both a right to be "normal" and a right to be "exceptional."[51] The laws and regulations reflect this paradox. Chapter 766 requires the placement to be in the "least restrictive environment," but parents and schools often do not know what this term means. Moreover, parents, who have the right to change any part of their child's IEP, often press for *more* restrictive placements.

The law requires that every effort be made to adapt the child's regular classroom before referral to special education. The least restrictive special education prototype, 502.1, calls for the child to spend all his time in the regular classroom after adjustments. Such a child is already effectively mainstreamed, but his education is still subject to the bureaucratic requirements of Chapter 766. Ironically, here and in many of the best classroom practices where the goal of mainstreaming is realized, Chapter 766's mechanisms are simply burdensome and irrelevant.

In the current school year, 1991–92, 953 Boston children, or 1.6 percent of total enrollment, attend private 766 schools at public expense. Their tuitions will cost the district $25.2 million, or 6.5 percent of the total school budget.[52] Principals and administrators alike believe that spending on private tuitions is excessive and unfair to other students. As one principal put it,

> Special education has been a dumping ground. It costs too much money. Some parents have been savvy—they've demanded, and gotten, advocates. And their kids truly don't need a private placement where the parents get *paid*

> to go visit their child out of state once a month. That, I feel, is money taken out of books and supplies for other kids. . . . Some of these parents plainly just want their kids to have a private school education and want their kids out of Boston.[53]

Chapter 766 private schools charge tuition determined by a state agency, not the market. Set by the Massachusetts Rate Setting Commission, tuitions have soared in recent years: The average tuition in 1990 was $19,585 for day programs and $65,085 for residential programs. In 1986, the rate setting commission developed what was known as the X-Y-Z pricing method. Each year, only one-third of the Chapter 766 schools received a comprehensive rate review. Off-cycle schools' rates were adjusted for inflation only. The establishment of this pricing method was intended to improve rate stability and predictability and eliminate retroactive rate setting.[54] Yet between 1986 and 1990, base tuition rates increased by 72 percent.[55] In fiscal year 1991, responsibility for setting rates was transferred to a new office, the Division of Purchased Services (DPS) within the Executive Office of Human Services. Instead of basing rates on past expenditures, DPS employs a component pricing method. The agency attempts to assign a fair market value to each of the program's elements—salaries, instructional materials, meals, facilities, and so forth—and then calculates a rate based on the quantity of each component and the credentials of the staff. In 1991, the state auditor speculated that the new method would only cause rates to increase further.[56]

Boston's current organizational structure widens the chasm between regular and special education. Special education staff in the schools, including evaluation team leaders (ETLs), psychologists, pupil adjustment counselors, and therapists, do not report to the principal but to the zone directors of special education and the district special education administrators. With an extraordinarily murky organizational structure, many principals understandably do not feel they are accountable for their schools' special education programs. The ETLs are not charged with the management or the delivery of the services specified in the IEPs they generate, or with overall compliance with 766 regulations. The ETLs' main interest is in satisfying the court's requirements, so they pressure therapists and evaluators to participate in team evaluations at the expense of providing timely services.[57] Furthermore, ETLs and evaluation team members are seldom associated with a specific school. Transient team members, lacking a thorough familiarity with a school's students, nearly always conduct student evaluations *de novo.*[58]

The Vicious Cycle of Regular and Special Education

Boston's regular and special education programs function in a vicious cycle. As the regular classroom declines, students are shunted to special education. Since special education's small class sizes and generous staffing levels are guaranteed by state regulations, costs skyrocket as enrollment burgeons. As a larger portion of the district's budget flows to the mandated program, the resources for regular education diminish further. Remedial programs are eliminated, instructional supply budgets slashed, and regular education programs debilitated, leading to still more special education referrals.

The cycle of failure originates with the dysfunction of the regular classroom, which operates as a zoned school. Without the vital culture and the steady hand of discipline offered by the focus school, Boston teachers' most urgent concern is simply maintaining order. While parents and principals can also recommend a team evaluation, teachers are most likely to refer students to special education.[59] Any disruptive, difficult, or simply different student represents an additional burden, and special education a way to lighten the load. Once referred to special education and placed in a restrictive prototype, he spends most of his day "pulled out" of his class in the "resource room." To coax reluctant parents to consent to the placement, the district often offers door-to-door minivan transportation (which costs the district over $10 million annually), when many of these students could easily catch the bus at the corner.[60]

Once enrolled in special education, very few students are referred back to regular education or even shifted to a less restrictive prototype.[61] As one elementary school principal said,

> In all of the other schools I've been in, I've never seen a child move to a less restrictive setting. They've always gone either to a *more* restrictive setting or the same thing but at a different level, such as middle school. They never get out of special education. Never get out.[62]

These students are much more likely to be retained in grade or to drop out of school altogether.[63] In 1991, the district's overall dropout rate was 33 percent, but it was 48 percent for special education students.[64] One would expect a higher dropout rate for the district's most difficult children. At the McKinley School, a vocational school for 502.4 prototype special needs children, 30 percent of the school's students drop out *each year.*[65]

Evidence of the debilitating cycle is found in what little information the federal government has on the enrollment of Massachusetts' special needs children. Learning disabled students comprise the largest category, accounting for 36.6 percent of all special needs students in 1989–90.[66] The number of learning disabled students rose 150 percent from 1977 to 1987. Emotionally disturbed students are the fourth-largest category, making up 14.2 percent of all special education students. Together, these two categories represent more than half of the state's special education students.

These two diagnoses are just those likely to increase as a result of a dysfunctional regular education program. Evidence of this is found in data maintained by Boston's special education department. While the law prohibits the classification of students by disability, the department maintains a record of services (vision, counseling, physical therapy, etc.) provided by the staff and contracted therapists. Out of the 13,399 special education students, 5,007 or 37.4 percent may receive no particular therapy but simply be pulled out and sent to the resource room.[67] Once there, many students learn little, and their behavior and skills regress.

Can Boston's teachers be reproached for referring too many students? The blame is better affixed to the dysfunctional school culture. Boston's schools are too often places with little hope, where teachers feel demoralized, overwhelmed, and undervalued. Discipline is administered with an unsteady hand, and expectations for students are minimal. Children sense all of this immediately, and many then tune out, act out, or worse, drop out. The cycle continues because the state law, unlike its federal counterpart, does not impose strict eligibility criteria for referral. Instead it relies on a tautological definition of a child with special needs: "a child [who], because of temporary or more permanent adjustment difficulties . . . requires special classes, instruction periods, or other special education services in order to successfully develop his individual educational potential."[68] Of course, as regular classrooms get worse, more students will be "unable to progress effectively in a regular school program" and thus, under the law, will require special education. The statute makes the vicious cycle unavoidable.

The absence of choice and diversity in schools further exacerbates the cycle. As Margaret Noel and Bruce Fuller have written, "From its beginnings, special education has included those children whose only handicap was that they stayed outside the mainstream of what was expected or tolerated in the schools."[69] Carl Milofsky's research similarly found that the majority of students enrolled in special classes do not suffer from neurologically based learning problems or physical handicaps. Their difficulties are, rather, the "byproducts of conflicts and rigidities in regular programs."[70] The way schools are organized, especially large urban schools, leads to the continuing failure of some children who are in time perceived as discipline problems, removed from regular education programs, and assigned to individualized special education programs that are of little value to them.[71] High enrollment in special education occurs most frequently in what he calls "administratively disrupted schools" where teachers

> come to see their students as increasingly disruptive over a period of years. Teachers and principals come to mistrust each other as they begin to doubt their efficacy in the schools. The teachers may be reluctant to admit that they cannot teach particular children . . . a cycle of frustration, anger, and failure forms between teachers and children; children may be damaged psychologically, and instruction may genuinely break down.[72]

A 1982 report by the court monitor for *Allen v. McDonough* describes similar conditions in Boston during Chapter 766's implementation:

> It has become clear to the monitor that lack of trust contributes to the perpetuation of the non-system.
>
> The school committee and the top administrators distrust each other, as do union and management, principals and teachers, older teachers and younger teachers, teachers and students, and whites and non-whites. . .
>
> In this atmosphere of distrust, it is not surprising that one group would by commission or omission cause the plans of another to fail.[73]

In 1988, an interagency task force chartered to study Chapter 766 programs noted that schools that refer large numbers of children to special education "send a message to other students that diversity cannot be addressed effectively in the regular setting."[74] In its 1991 study, Arthur D. Little also attributed overenrollment in Boston's special education programs to rigidities in regular classroom practices:

> The most plausible explanation is that BPS has not been able to develop and implement [regular education] programs which meet the needs of such students and the solution is to remove the students rather than improve the programs. The trend is *only* reversible through the provision of more appropriate services and interventions earlier in the process. To not do so reinforces the continuation of a system which will never operate adequately as its failure creates new demands every year.[75]

The Arthur D. Little report found a pattern of poor support for those students later referred to special education. For instance, counseling was available in few Boston schools because staff psychologists spent almost all their time on team evaluations for new referrals and reevaluations.[76] Evaluation team leaders, the study found, are rarely involved in prereferral evaluations.[77] Another study on mandated programs in the Boston schools, by the Massachusetts Advocacy Center, found that students in the early grades who simply need extra attention are often referred to special education. The 1990 study pointed to the near doubling of Boston's special education placement rate from the first to the fourth grade.[78] It also found that the pressure to improve standardized test scores is a disincentive for regular teachers to incorporate students with different learning styles. Parents, meanwhile, may see special education as the only hope when the regular classroom is failing their child. As a result, Massachusetts Advocacy speculated, "Both teachers and parents may be more strongly motivated to refer students 'out' than to keep or draw students 'in.'"[79] As one special education teacher said,

> I think some kids are locking into special ed early on and they just don't get out when they should or can. . . . Some parents know that their kids may be okay in math, but they can have 8 students to one teacher [in special education classes], versus a regular math class of 20 to 1. If there were smaller classes, maybe these kids wouldn't need it as much. I think there should be more flow in and out—kids may need it at a certain point and then not need it.[80]

Evaluation team leaders may have an interest in maximizing referrals. ETLs work for the district special education department; their number is a function of the number of evaluations. Principals, too, may have an incentive to refer weak or troublesome students to special education, where the principal is not accountable for student performance. Finally, some special education teachers may have reason not to return children to regular classrooms:

> There are ways in which we can get a lot more bang for our buck in special education, and that's going to have to happen because it's so amazingly expensive. That means taking a look at prereferral strategies and removing the anxiety of teachers about losing their job if a youngster comes out of special education.[81]

One consequence of over-referral is the evolution of a separate, segregated education system for students with behavioral and emotional problems. According to the Boston Municipal Research Bureau, much of the growth in special education results from its use as a dumping ground for disruptive and even violent students.[82] The segregated prototypes pull out large numbers of children from the regular classroom, depriving them of the opportunity to participate in academic and extracurricular activities with their peers. It also contravenes Chapter 766's intent of placing children in a setting that ensures their "maximum possible development in the least restrictive environment" so as to "minimize the possibility of stigmatization."[83]

The vicious cycle gradually undermines not only the quality of Boston's regular education programs, but of its special programs as well. As the number of student assessments and reevaluations grows, existing special education resources are spread thinner. To attain compliance with court orders, the district directs resources away from services and toward evaluations. Arthur D. Little found that as a result many students are found eligible for special education services that cannot be delivered.[84]

Chapter 766's generous entitlements and disregard for costs have had far-reaching consequences for both the district and the state. To meet its obligation to fund Chapter 766, the state was forced to cut subsidies for regular education. Localities were forced to raise property taxes to fund regular education to the point where they were among the highest in the country. In November 1981, citizens revolted by passing Proposition 2½, which amended the state constitution to place a ceiling on local property tax increases. Public education survived in the 1980s through the fortunate coincidence of declining student enrollment and a strong economy, which expanded the local tax base and permitted increased state aid to localities. In the 1990s, however, fortunes changed. The economic downturn brought cuts in both state and federal aid, and enrollment is projected to increase by about 2 percent each year.[85]

Many education advocates contend that the quality of regular education programs can only be improved by increasing state or federal funding. The state and federal governments have reduced or eliminated several supplementary programs over the last decade. For example, the federal government's support for Chapter 1 programs, which provide remedial services to low-income children, has decreased sharply. The state's Chapter 188 and Chapter 727 school improvement programs, which fund early childhood, at-risk remediation, and dropout prevention programs in low-income communities, have been dramatically cut since 1988. The state auditor's office suggests that some students newly enrolled in special education would have been better served by such remedial programs. To stem further referrals, the auditor recommends that the legislature restore these programs.[86]

TABLE 8-3
VICIOUS CYCLE: PROJECTED SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENT

Year	Special Education Enrollment	Total District Enrollment	% of Total Enrollment
1987–88	12,575	59,445	21.1
1988–89	12,818	59,184	21.7
1989–90	13,114	59,597	22.0
1990–91	13,341	60,543	22.0
1991–92	13,399	60,922	22.0
1992–93[a]	13,667	61,287	22.3
1993–94	13,940	61,655	22.6
1994–95	14,219	62,025	22.9
1995–96	14,503	62,397	23.2

Sources: October Reports, Massachusetts Department of Education; Special Education Department, Boston Public Schools, 11 March 1992.

[a] Special education enrollment: projected average annual increase of 2 percent based on average annual increase during years 1987–1992. Total district enrollment: projected assuming average annual increase of 0.6 percent.

In Boston, however, *total* school spending has increased over the last ten years. The problem is not a shortage of resources, but that funds have been directed toward special education at the expense of other programs. In the absence of radical restructuring and statutory reform, increasing district funding will do nothing to break the destructive cycle. Additional funds would only license the district to defer the structural changes needed to stem the flow of students to special education. Without such reforms, the new monies will be directed in accordance with the bureaucratic requirements of the court order. The inevitable result: more psychologists, specialists, and other special education personnel will be hired so that more students can be evaluated on time and enrolled in special education. These students, of course, will be destined for academic failure.

TABLE 8-4
VICIOUS CYCLE: PROJECTED SPECIAL EDUCATION COSTS

	All Programs		
Year	Headcount Enrollment	Total Instructional Expenditures ($)	Per Headcount Expenditures ($)
1987–88	59,445	170,867,092	2,874
1988–89	59,184	187,168,484	3,162
1989–90	59,597	188,149,667	3,157
1990–91	60,543	215,755,276	3,563
1991–92	60,922	210,943,123	3,462
1992–93[a]	61,287	210,943,123	3,441
1993–94	61,655	210,943,123	3,421
1994–95	62,025	221,490,279	3,570
1995–96	62,397	232,564,793	3,727

	Special Education		
Year	Headcount Enrollment	Total Instructional Expenditures ($)	Per Headcount Expenditures ($)
1987–88	12,575	68,843,564	5,474
1988–89	12,818	76,604,757	5,976
1989–90	13,114	80,630,036	6,148
1990–91	13,341	92,997,686	6,970
1991–92	13,399	94,845,357	7,078
1992–93[b]	13,600	100,536,078	7,392
1993–94	13,804	106,568,243	7,720
1994–95	14,011	112,962,338	8,062
1995–96	14,221	119,740,078	8,419

	All Other Education		
Year	Headcount Enrollment	Total Instructional Expenditures ($)	Per Headcount Expenditures ($)
1987–88	46,870	102,023,528	2,176
1988–89	46,366	110,563,727	2,384
1989–90	46,483	107,519,631	2,313
1990–91	47,202	122,757,590	2,600
1991–92	47,523	116,097,766	2,442
1992–93[c]	47,687	110,407,045	2,315
1993–94	47,851	104,374,880	2,181
1994–95	48,014	108,527,941	2,260
1995–96	48,116	112,824,715	2,344

Sources: Total Enrollment: October Reports, Massachusetts Department of Education; Special Education Enrollment: Special Education Department, Boston Public Schools, 11 March 1992; Instructional Costs: Program Budgets FY88–FY92, Budget Office, Boston Public Schools.

[a] Headcount enrollment: projected, using average 0.6% annual increase. Total instructional expenditures: projected, assuming no annual increase 1992–94 and using average 5% annual increase thereafter.

[b] Headcount enrollment: projected, using average 1.5% annual increase. Total instructional expenditures: projected, using average 6% annual increase.

[c] Projected, using projected total enrollment less projected special education enrollment.

If structural reform does not occur, the cycle and further destruction of regular programs can be expected to continue, as projected in table 8-3. Enrollments are projected based on the average annual growth over the last five years. The effect on regular education resources is projected in table 8-4.

Breaking the Cycle

Only when the destructive cycle is broken can taxpayers and local officials have confidence that new funds will be well spent and children will benefit from the increased investment. Twelve actions are recommended.

Adopt a Universal Teaching Certificate

Special education directors in the state cite inadequate training of regular education teachers as a primary obstacle to reincorporating special needs children in the regular classroom. The state auditor's office has recommended establishing a universal teaching certificate to ensure that all new teachers have expertise in both regular and special programs.[87] Linda Nathan, assistant director of the Fenway school-within-a-school, calls for thinking beyond the confines of the current job descriptions:

> We're not retraining teachers. Instead of saying, "Let's look at special education differently; let's look at team teaching, with a special needs teacher and a regular needs teacher together." Let's talk about *all* regular education teachers becoming special needs teachers *as well.* And let's really think about class size, of 14 instead of 30. Let's think creatively about how to shift around the existing dollars. We're just not thinking.[88]

Rebuild Regular Education

To stem the flow of referrals, regular education should be strengthened through the entrepreneurial schools of chapters 4 through 7. As one principal said,

> The way the system is set up, kids are in special needs classes because of *us*—regular ed teachers and others who referred kids to special education because we couldn't handle them. . . . We are still trying to teach the way our teachers taught us: in battlefield formation lined up in a row, and everybody does the same thing. That is not what a classroom is about. You have to have this group doing this, this group doing that. There are a lot of different learning styles in a classroom. Johnny might not do very well with the typical learning style, taking notes and listening to a lecture. And for many students that is not the preferred learning style.[89]

Entrepreneurial schools are likely to attain a high level of commitment from a cooperative staff and to foster a culture of belonging and discipline for their students. School choice would allow students with varied cognitive styles, intellectual interests, and behaviors to find schools that meet their individual needs. The district's philosophy should be to meet the needs of as many children as possible—even those in principle eligible for special education—within the regular program. Teachers could modify teaching materials, curricula, and teaching modes to accommodate individual learning differences.[90] As the budget of chapter 7's Beacon School revealed, each school would have enough money for special education teachers and aides, guidance counselors, psychologists, and therapists—all dedicated to the school. Each teacher would be able to call on these resources. In turn, referral rates to special education would drop. As Kim Marshall explained,

> Would we have fewer special ed referrals if teachers were teaching in a more broad-based way, using better hands-on methods or more than one teacher in a class? Absolutely. Groups, cooperative learning techniques, computers—if you're tutoring with all of these things, if they are used more effectively in the class, the number of people in the special ed classes will go way down. The quality of teaching affects everything. The nicest compliment I ever had as a regular teacher was, "if they were all like you we wouldn't have any kids in special ed."[91]

In turn, funds saved from declining special education enrollment could be invested in the new schools, decreasing class sizes and funding in-service teacher training, teachers' aides, and remedial interventions. As one teacher said,

> I think that special ed is necessary. But I don't think that anyone who just causes a problem in the classroom should be put into a special ed setting, and that is what happens in a lot of areas. Because of the large numbers of students in each class, you have problems you wouldn't have otherwise. Twenty-eight children is too many in a classroom, especially in the early grades. In grades 1 and 2, I don't think there should be any more than 20. You can get rid of your problems in special ed if you have the smaller classes.[92]

Implement Exhaustive Prereferral Measures

Most educators agree that students who are slow learners, absentees, or substance abusers are best served by modifying regular education programs rather than placing them in segregated classes. Accordingly, several recent studies have recommended strengthening prereferral measures.[93] In Boston, efforts are rarely made to adapt the regular classroom before a student is referred to special education. As one headmaster explained,

> The big problem with special ed is that early, well-diagnosed intervention is lacking. Special ed has become remedial ed in this system: When a kid hasn't learned something—maybe because he hasn't shown up to school, not because he has any particular learning disability—he becomes special ed.
>
> I think that we need to have a prereferral process that is locked in stone, and we need to have guidelines that define better which kids have access to special education. P. L. 94-142, the federal legislation, has that. 766 does not. Consequently, we have kids who go into special ed who shouldn't be there. It just backlogs us up. The statute [766] allows all of the stuff that is going on and we need to change it to look more like 94-142.[94]

Kansas strengthened its prereferral regulations after it found out that referral rates to special education, as in Massachusetts, varied widely from district to district. North Carolina similarly found that districts with rigorous prereferral procedures directed support services to the regular classroom sooner.[95] Boston should follow the lead of these states and require that such modifications be vigorously pursued prior to referral.

Establish Rigorous Eligibility Criteria

In keeping with the federal law, P. L. 94-142, the state should amend Chapter 766 to establish clear eligibility criteria for 766 programs.[96] The definition of what constitutes special needs should be uniform, unambiguous, and, where possible, quantifiable. Disappointing academic performance and routine discipline problems are not disabilities. Children needing remedial education, speech therapy, and counseling should be able to obtain these and other supplementary services while remaining in regular education. The principal's obligation to refer children, or notify parents of their right to refer, for academic non-performance, absence, or suspension should be eliminated; these are problems to be resolved in the regular classroom. Establishing such criteria will deter teachers and administrators from excluding from the regular classroom children who are not disabled but simply have different cognitive styles or emotional troubles.

Simplify the Evaluation Process

Chapter 766 was intended to ensure a thoughtful, comprehensive review of the child's unique situation, but its burdensome evaluation process ties up staff who could be providing services to children. The thousands of individual plans are now generated by computer, suggesting that the aim is to comply with the court's requirements rather than to forge a unique plan for each child's education. The regulations should be changed to simplify the evaluation procedure and to afford the new schools' directors of special education and their staffs greater discretion. This would enable schools to meet the individual needs of their students and to set up programs tailored to particular disabilities and learning problems.

Eliminate Preferential Protections

Massachusetts should adopt the federal standard requiring that special needs children receive a "free and appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs," rather than the current requirement to "minimize the possibility of stigmatization and to assure the maximum possible development in the least restrictive environment."[97] The law should proscribe schools from excluding children with special needs and ensure that children obtain the services they need to progress educationally. But this should not be done at the expense of regular education pupils; all children should have equal rights to an education. Even many special needs administrators recommend such a change. In a survey of special education directors conducted by the state auditor's office, 70 of 176 (40 percent) felt that Massachusetts should adopt the federal standard.[98]

Change the Organizational Structure

Reorganizing regular and special education is essential to removing the current incentives for parents, teachers, principals, and ETLs to refer children to special education. First, the executive director of a school should be responsible both for the provision of special education services and for compliance with Chapter 766. All school staff, including special education teachers and specialists, should report to the school's director. The new schools' executive directors must have full authority to deploy school resources, to determine class size, and set staffing levels. One principal stated the problem:

> We have a big special ed program: seven substantially separate classrooms. We've really hit a saturation point, where we need to start to combine resources. We need to do mixed homerooms, we need to start having some of the special ed teachers pick up some of the regular ed programs and vice versa, so that we can reduce the chasm between regular ed and special ed.[99]

As the Arthur D. Little study recommended, the ETL position should be eliminated and some ETLs rehired as directors of special education, reporting to the principal. These directors would be held responsible not only for evaluations but also for service delivery, mainstreaming, and the educational outcomes of all special needs children.[100] Some principals would like to deploy specialists to assist children *before* referral, rather than have them spend all their time on evaluations. But they are prevented, because these staff members do not report to them nor are they assigned to their buildings:

> To give you a comparison, I have a friend who's in a suburban school system. Every school has its own school psychologist who goes around looking for children [in need of help]. In Boston, not one elementary school has a psychologist assigned to the building.[101]

With no authority over their own budgets, principals must resort to obtaining external grants to bring in counselors from local community health centers or contract with outside private organizations whose services are covered by parents' insurance. Specialists should be based in particular schools, so they can come to know the children, the regular education teachers and aides, and each other. All specialists should report to the school's director of special education, not to the zone offices or to Court Street.

Categorize Disabilities and Collect Data

As recommended by the Interagency Working Group on Special Education, the Boston schools and the state should collect data on the statistical incidence of children's disabilities.[102] The information should not be used during evaluation, as it may result in unreflective determinations of placement. But it is essential to compile a database that tracks students over their school careers and compares needs, interventions, and outcomes. The best demonstrated practices could then be identified. Today, with information limited by law, it is impossible to assess or refine practices based on their actual outcomes. For example, as the Working Group asked, do students with severe articulation problems benefit more from sustained therapy or from a brief but intensive intervention? The district has no way of knowing. Children pay the price, since the district makes no effort to learn from the experiences of the thousands of children that came before them. The rationale for refusing to categorize children by disabilities—to free them from the stigmatizing effect of categorization—is also undermined. Children are marked simply by being in special education, segregated from other students.[103]

Monitor and Manage Cost Effectiveness

Advocates have long insisted that cost should not be a consideration in caring for a child's special needs. Yet in Boston, where by law cost is no object, special education programs are widely viewed as inadequate. Could the same resources be spent more effectively? Educators of special needs children must avail themselves of cost/benefit analysis.

Since revenues as well as costs must be managed, Boston's special education administrators should aggressively pursue Medicaid and third-party reimbursement. Recent changes and clarifications in federal Medicaid laws increase the opportunity for the district to obtain reimbursement for services specified in the child's IEP, including occupational, physical, and speech therapy, assessment, and counseling.[104] Reimbursement is available not only for contracted services but also for those provided directly by district staff. At least ten other states currently obtain such reimbursements or are preparing to do so. The district would then become a Medicaid provider and collect reimbursements under existing or new state Medicaid program areas.[105]

Selectively Mainstream Children

The current orthodoxy among advocates and many academics holds that all special education children, regardless of circumstance, should be mainstreamed with their regular education peers, making "disabled students more fully-participating members of their classrooms and schools, principally by introducing special education resources into regular classrooms."[106] To school staff, the call to mainstream reflects a reversal of policy. As one principal noted,

> There was a lot of confusion as to how special education should be done. So instead of experimenting with a small pilot, we started pulling kids out from here and there, every time the bell rings. All right. Now look at where we are, almost 20 years later. We're trying to put all the students *back* in the classroom. All that money to pull them out. All that time. Isn't that something?[107]

Mainstreaming is clearly desirable for many children, and Boston's practice of segregating children in resource rooms is indefensible. But mainstreaming should not be pursued unthinkingly. Some children with emotional and behavioral problems, for example, may progress best in intensive programs customized to their needs, even if they are segregated. There are other children currently pulled out, whose special needs could be met in the regular classroom, if adequate support were provided. The mainstreaming of such students can succeed only with a classroom team of regular and special education teachers, both highly skilled and committed to the endeavor. Several teachers spoke candidly of the considerable challenges—and risks—of mainstreaming. As one special education teacher contemplated,

> If you're going to integrate all of these prototypes, I would love to go out and be *part* of it—to be the second teacher in the classroom, dealing with all the special needs kids. I think that's a wonderful concept.

> But I look at my [502.4] students, and as much as I'd like to see them in a regular class, I know it doesn't offer enough support for them.
>
> I ask my kids why they're here: "Yeah, this teacher made me mad, so I punched her." Or "I threw a book at her." Some of my kids did bizarre sexual things in the classroom. If a teacher says to a student, "Come in and take a seat," and he says, "F - - - you," and whatever you do, you just can't teach—well, if I were a regular ed teacher, *I* wouldn't want that student in my classroom either.
>
> I think that there *are* those behavioral kids, and teachers have not wanted to address their needs. One person is not capable of doing that. This integration model, where they put another person in to work together, that's an alternative. But I don't think that you can expect, or that it's fair, to say that the teacher didn't want them there. Because if that student is keeping 30 other kids from learning—well, it may not be fair to the one, but the numbers outweigh that.[108]

Certain groups of students have more serious disabilities, such as neurological dysfunction or seizure disorders. These students would derive no benefit from inclusion in the regular classroom. As one principal said,

> Special education is needed; I have a lot of children whose needs wouldn't be met without it. There are severe special needs children that really don't belong in the regular classroom—you cannot close your eyes to that.[109]

Whenever mainstreaming is contemplated, the effect on regular education children and their rate of learning must also be taken into account. Regular education children will often benefit from the incorporation of children with diverse disabilities. But including highly disruptive children who sap the teacher's time and upset a disciplined classroom is unfair to the majority of students.

The mainstreaming ideology and the equity culture maintain that any form of tracking or ability grouping is anathema. But common sense suggests that in some instances it would benefit students. Without ability grouping, teachers may slow down the presentation of subject matter to fast and committed learners in order to bring along students with minor learning problems—even if these students are also provided with expensive aides and extra help. For some schools, this will be an acceptable compromise. Entrepreneurial schools and choice would foster varied approaches to educating special needs children, and the district would not be held hostage to educational fashion. Notwithstanding current thinking, the cost to educate both classes of children under diverse approaches *should* be fair ground for consideration.

Special needs advocates' views on mainstreaming often do not square with the wishes of the parents they claim to represent. According to the Massachusetts Department of Education, in over 90 percent of administrative appeals parents sought more-restrictive settings for their children, not less.[110] In 40 percent of the first 1,000 hearings after 766 was implemented, parents demanded to keep their children in restrictive, private school programs. Furthermore, 42 percent of the Massachusetts districts polled by the auditor's office claimed that parental objections were the most frequent obstacle to moving a child to a less restrictive placement.[111]

Many administrators, regular, and even special education teachers are skeptical about mainstreaming. Some special education teachers believe that they can do the best job themselves.[112] One special education teacher has seven children in his classroom and two aides. Much of the time is spent working in separate parts of the room in one-on-one instruction; the class reconvenes for group activities. He questions whether his easily distracted students would be well served in the regular classroom:

> I don't believe that the most effective way to teach them would be to have them fully integrated, because how can you work on the distraction? How can kids be integrated all the time and not be destructive to the regular kids? I favor the approach where we're in a regular school and we do certain integrated activities. That's the kind of integration that would allow regular kids to see my kids, not be afraid of them, and learn about them, and at the same time allow my kids to do the small group activities that I think are important.[113]

Other 502.4 students, he believes, could be mainstreamed, including children with vision impairments and those in SAR (Supportive Academic Remediation) classes, who test as slow learners but are not mentally retarded.

Mainstreaming can succeed only when relations between teachers are collegial, since it requires regular and special education teachers and their aides to work in harmony.[114] With such collegiality lacking in many of Boston's schools, mainstreaming will likely fail. An inspiring exception is the Mary E. Curley Middle School, where staff members work together to help students within the regular classroom and reduce referrals. Entrepreneurial schools, with a like-minded team committed to a common vision for educating special needs students, would be better equipped to undertake this challenge. How each of the new schools responds would be a primary consideration for teachers choosing schools. As one principal undertaking mainstreaming explained,

> I can't even say to a person, "You'd really be much happier at such and such a school, because they do things like you do—they keep special ed students separated, and all the things you feel strongly about, they do."[115]

In the short term, mainstreaming will not save money. One administrator explained,

> When the emotionally disturbed kid who's been totally isolated comes into this group of 30, of course he's disruptive. That's why it's not going to save money: The restructuring that needs to be done is to integrate the kids and the teachers, and at no point down the road are we going to lose the special needs teachers. They are going to be integrated into the regular classrooms.[116]

But in the long term, as regular education is strengthened, mainstreaming will reduce costs. A study of school districts outside Massachusetts compared the cost of instruction for special needs children and found that, controlling for student handicap and functional status, the least restrictive instructional environment was also the least expensive.[117]

Minimize Private School Placements

As Edward Moscovitch has proposed, the law should require that a parent, school district, or independent evaluator show an overwhelming programmatic advantage before a child is removed to a private school.[118] If rates cannot be set by the market for private schools, BPS should establish a financial incentive for public schools to re-enroll students currently attending private day and residential programs. For example, if a student is currently costing $80,000 a year in tuition expense, the public school could be offered $40,000 to create an appropriate setting. Not only would this reduce costs, but by creating an internal market, it would put pressure on the private schools to lower costs. South Deerfield, Massachusetts, for example, successfully re-enrolled three students from out-of-district residential programs, reducing the total expense for them from $100,000 to $50,000.[119]

Upgrade Information Management Systems

Boston currently keeps track of students' IEPs on a computer system, SEIMS (Special Education Information Management System). BPS has the opportunity, as Arthur D. Little identified, to upgrade this system, expanding its functions beyond managing the schedules of team specialists, developing and documenting IEPs, and assessing and reporting compliance.[120] The Arthur D. Little report argues that SEIMS would be far more useful to managers and providers at the school site if its functions were enhanced to collect and report data on the provision of services. Each school could have at little cost a personal computer and printer linked to the central system. User-friendly screens would allow school personnel to enter IEPs and translate them into parents' native languages, to notify the district when services have not been provided, generate daily staff schedules, monitor their school's compliance, and review student progress against IEP goals.

The Boston area is a high technology center. The district should put out a call to public-spirited firms to collaborate on the development of a state-of-the-art system for all facets of special education administration. The developer could retain the rights to the technology and could market it to other large districts. A local computer company would likely donate the necessary hardware for all the schools. Such a program would be a national model.

Together, these actions would strengthen regular education while ensuring that all children have the opportunity to learn. But special education is only one of two costly programs mandated by the state; bilingual education is the other. How should Boston's schools educate children with limited English proficiency? By freeing parents to choose the education they think best, could choice and entrepreneurial schools defuse the political tensions surrounding bilingual education? These are questions for the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

Bilingual Education

IN 1967, U.S. Senator Ralph Yarborough introduced legislation to provide federal funds for bilingual education programs. But as to the programs' design and purpose, the legislation was vague—perhaps intentionally so. Even Yarborough admitted, "Every time people ask me, What does bilingual education mean? I reply that it means different things to different people."[1] Is bilingual education intended to help children with limited English proficiency (LEP) master the English language? Or is its purpose to preserve the native language and culture? A quarter of a century later, these questions remain unanswered.

Despite this confusion of purpose, Massachusetts did not hesitate to adopt its own bilingual education law, Chapter 71A of the Massachusetts General Laws, mandating transitional bilingual education (TBE), an instructional model of questionable efficacy and considerable cost. In Boston today, 16.6 percent of all students, and 40.5 percent of all Hispanic students, are in bilingual programs.[2] Their education costs far more than that of regular education students. Critics charge that many LEP students remain in the program well beyond its intended three-year course and receive inadequate instruction in English. Deprived of the English-language skills they need to perform at grade level in the regular classroom, these students are often referred to special education. Many drop out, lacking the skills they need to get good jobs or go to college.

Many bilingual educators never wanted TBE to be "transitional" in the first place. LEP students, they argue, should be educated in both English and their native language throughout their schooling. Critics of bilingual education claim that intensive English as a Second Language (ESL pull-out) programs result in far superior development of English skills. Other educators claim the best results obtain from "structured immersion" programs, in which children are taught in English at a level appropriate to their comprehension. Still other educators call for two-way bilingual programs, in which English-speaking students master the language of their classmates. Which programs are the most effective for which ends? Can one program meet the needs of all children? Would choice satisfy all parents and defuse the political tensions that haunt bilingual education?

Transitional Bilingual Education

The nation's schools have historically treated linguistic minorities shamefully. Many children with limited English proficiency were labeled as mentally retarded, punished for using their own language, or simply left to sink or swim in the alien classroom of their English-proficient peers. This ignominious history fired today's emotional debate over bilingual education. Policymakers came to believe, as bilingual education researchers Christine Rossell and J. Michael Ross put it, "that any policy which ignores the mother tongue in favor of English is racist, and any policy which maintains the mother tongue, however inadequately, is equitable."[3]

Educators now recognize that LEP students need special help. While several different instructional approaches have evolved, TBE is by far the most common in the United States. LEP students are supposed to remain in TBE for three years, and then make the transition into the regular classroom. Each class is composed of students of one native language; the teacher initially instructs the students in all subject matter in the native tongue, and provides English lessons. As the students' proficiency increases, the teacher uses more and more English until the students are prepared to join their regular education peers.

TBE's instructional design relies on three cognitive theories: First, learning to read in the native language improves students' ability to learn to read English. Second, unless instruction in mathematics and other subjects continues in the native language while students learn English, they will fall behind in these subjects. Third, classes conducted in the native language provide an environment supportive of learning, increasing parental involvement and enhancing student achievement.

Proponents of bilingual education obtained a governmental mandate through Congress (in the Bilingual Education Act of 1968) and the courts. In the pivotal 1974 Supreme Court decision *Lau v. Nichols*, Chinese plaintiffs from California successfully argued that their special needs were not met by programs in the schools. The plaintiffs invoked the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII, which states that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participating in or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program receiving federal assistance."[4] The Court held that any school district receiving federal assistance must overcome the English language deficiencies of its LEP students: "There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful discussion."[5]

But the justices left it to local officials to determine how to meet this requirement: "No specific remedy is urged. . . . Teaching English to the students of Chinese ancestry who do not speak the language is one choice. Giving instructions to this group in Chinese is another. There may be others."[6] Yet in 1975, the Office for Civil Rights issued the *Lau remedies*, recommendations that set forth in every detail how districts should design and administer programs for LEP students. To determine the pupil's primary language, school administrators were instructed not to gauge the student's proficiency in English, but to find out which language was used at home, which language he had first learned, and which he used the most frequently. A student fluent in English might therefore still be eligible for services.[7] The federal government insisted that TBE was the optimal approach for providing equal opportunity to linguistic minorities. No scientific evidence was presented to back this claim, yet federal aid was made contingent on following the guidelines and most school districts fell in line.[8]

Excessive interference by the judiciary and federal and state government limitations on the autonomy of local school districts have detracted from the education of LEP children and stifled the development of promising pedagogical alternatives. Indeed, the Lau remedies have sometimes been taken to absurd extremes. Since Cape Verdean has no written form, rigorous adherence to the TBE model justified the federal government in creating one. Students could then progress from the spoken language, to reading the synthetic Cape Verdean, to reading Portuguese, and finally to learning English.[9] Similarly, the Office for Civil Rights ordered a district in Alaska to develop a written Eskimo language to support TBE.[10]

Massachusetts was the first state to enact legislation requiring transitional bilingual education in any district with 20 or more LEP children who speak the same language. Chapter 71A does not require more than three years of TBE instruction, and parents can opt out of the program, though this requires an active step on their part. The law allows school committees to sustain the program beyond three years, however, and many advocates say children are mainstreamed too soon.[11]

Effectiveness of TBE

Ever since *Lau*, the effectiveness of transitional bilingual education has been questioned. The debate has been long on passion but short on clarity. Studies on TBE have focused on two measures of academic success: English and math skills. Most rigorous scientific studies show TBE to be no more effective than simply placing LEP students in regular classrooms.[12] Some advocates, however, have urged that the program's measure of success be broadened. Data that gauge the "social pathology which accompanies injustice"—including employment figures after graduation, drug addiction and alcoholism levels, suicide rates, and prevalence of psychiatric disorders—would all be assessed in evaluating the program's value.[13] The goals of bilingual education may indeed reach beyond English and math proficiency. Yet these are the skills that are the most vital to students' futures. As Rossell and Ross have argued, it is on these skills that tests will be given throughout their schooling, and on the basis of which key decisions affecting their further education and livelihood will be made.[14]

The research on bilingual education has a poor reputation among both advocates and critics. The primary methodological problem is the absence of a control group. A properly designed study would compare the "treatment" group of students administered the bilingual program with a "control" group of students in a submersion program (i.e., in a regular classroom). Many studies erroneously claim a program is effective if its students show any gain in skills. But if the gains made by students in the treatment group are *less* than those of the control group, then the child would have progressed more without the intervention and the program has in fact had an adverse effect on the child's education. Rosalie Porter, author of *Forked Tongue: The Politics of Bilingual Education,* points out that many studies lack comparison groups or fail to pretest students to determine initial levels of aptitude.[15]

Even bilingual advocates concede that there is little scientific evidence of TBE's superiority. One well-known bilingual advocate, Kenji Hakuta, concludes,

> Studies of the effectiveness of bilingual education in improving either English or math scores have not been overwhelmingly in favor of bilingual education. To be sure, there are programs that have been highly effective, but not very many.[16]

Rossell and Ross have done the most comprehensive review to date of the many existing studies on TBE.[17] Their search of the past two decades' literature identified 35 studies that were methodologically rigorous. For a study to qualify, they insisted that there be both treatment and control groups, and if students were not assigned randomly to these groups, that pre-treatment differences between students be controlled for statistically. Of the 35 studies, 29 percent found TBE to be superior to submersion, 21 percent found TBE to be inferior, and 50 percent found it to be no different than submersion. Only 7 percent of the studies found TBE to be superior at teaching math, 27 percent found it inferior, and 67 percent found it to be no different. In other words, 71 percent of the studies found TBE no better or worse at teaching English, and 94 percent found it no better or worse at teaching math than doing nothing.[18]

Rossell and Ross conclude that the studies find no support for two of the three key theoretical premises of TBE. First, there is no empirical evidence that learning to read in the native tongue facilitates reading in English. If it did, English achievement under TBE would be consistently superior to submersion. Second, there is no evidence that learning math and other subjects in their native language keeps language minority children from falling behind in these subjects. If it did, the math achievement of students in TBE would also be consistently superior to submersion.[19]

In fact, common sense suggests that the best predictor of achievement in the second language is the amount of time studying it. As Rossell and Ross also note, this supposition is borne out in nearly every analysis. The "time on task" principle was perhaps most exhaustively explored in the Canadian structured immersion experiments. Canadian researchers compiled the results of hundreds of experiments in which students received different amounts of second language instruction, from less than an hour a day to the full school day. Achievement in the second language varied commensurately.[20] Some critics have argued that these tests were conducted with middle-class children and the findings, therefore, are not applicable to the American immigrant population. But experiments with working-class children replicated the findings and only underscored the time on task principle.[21]

If time on task best predicts student outcomes, would not TBE always produce inferior results? Rossell and Ross note that many studies found TBE to be the same or better than submersion. They conjecture, first, that the psychological benefits of TBE over submersion—the use of native-language instructors and the welcoming environment—may cause students to come to school more often. The TBE student may spend more time in school, yet receive less English instruction when there, than his counterpart who is alienated in the regular classroom. Second, instruction in the best TBE classrooms may more nearly resemble that of structured immersion programs, in which most instruction is in English. Rossell and Ross conclude that the most promising approach may be structured immersion with bilingual teachers of the same ethnic group as the students. Then, both the psychological and cognitive needs of LEP children would be satisfied.[22]

One of the largest studies of bilingual education is the American Institutes for Research (AIR) report of 1977, a national survey of 38 Title VII Spanish/English bilingual programs involving some 8,900 students. AIR compared academic outcomes of students in transitional bilingual education with those of students in submersion programs, including some with ESL pull-out classes. AIR found TBE to be inferior to submersion for learning English (worse than "doing nothing") and no different for learning math.[23]

TBE advocates like Jim Cummins, a Canadian linguist, have argued that the study failed to distinguish between effective and ineffective bilingual programs, and that weaknesses in many TBE implementations—including a lack of bilingual teachers, poor curricula, and lack of support from the district—obscured the strengths of high-quality programs. Furthermore, some non–Title VII treatments had bilingual teachers. Since treatments were defined on the basis of funding, not instructional content, Cummins and others contend that no inferences can be drawn from the study.[24] It is true that the report does not tell us anything about what the results of TBE would be if it were ideally implemented. But as a test of the programs actually in use, the results stand.

Cummins' criticism is especially ironic in light of how some bilingual education researchers would characterize the best-case instruction. William Tickunoff's study of successful bilingual instruction identified three key attributes: 1) 80 percent of classroom time is allocated to academic learning, 2) teachers use the native language only when needed to clarify instruction, and 3) non-language subjects are taught in English. These, of course, are the characteristics of structured immersion, not of TBE.[25]

The Ramirez Report is the most ambitious study to date comparing instructional programs for LEP children. This two-volume, 1,000-page work was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education at a cost of $4.5 million. Titled the *Longitudinal Study of Structured Immersion Strategy, Early-Exit and Late-Exit Transitional Bilingual Education Programs for Language-Minority Children*, it examined nine programs involving 2,000 Spanish-speaking students over a four-year period. The study concluded that "it appears that [academic skills in] those sites that provided their students with the most primary [native] language instruction consistently grew faster" and that students "who were provided with a substantial and consistent primary language development program, learned mathematics, English language, and English reading skills as fast or faster than the normal population."[26]

But Christine Rossell has identified several fundamental methodological flaws that call the study's findings into question.[27] One of her main critiques is that the study design and subsequent data analysis are based on nominal program types—early-exit TBE, late-exit TBE, and structured immersion—rather than on what actually occurred in the classroom. The researchers categorized each classroom as one of these three types, and gathered extensive pre- and post-treatment data on all participating students. The problem, the report's authors concede, is that there is as much variation *within* the actual classroom practice of each program type as there is *between* nominal program types. In fact, the researchers gathered and reported extensive data on observed classroom practices—most significantly, the amount and type of English used—but failed to incorporate these telling data in their analysis. For instance, in both the early- and late-exit TBE programs, a significant proportion of teachers did not speak Spanish, making the programs much more like immersion. Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of the early exit programs and one-third of the late-exit programs provided first graders with reading instruction in English, yet TBE requires that reading be taught first in the native language, and in English only in the second grade or later.[28] This finding, too, suggests that many programs labeled TBE were in fact closer to structured immersion.

Students in all programs were close to the national norm in English by the end of first grade. Rossell speculates that these students, after spending all of their early childhood in the United States, might have been highly proficient in English when entering kindergarten. Rossell provides additional persuasive evidence that many of the children in the programs already knew English.[29] Not only were the scores close to the national norm after kindergarten, but the *change* in scores over time was very small. Scores of a truly LEP child would begin well below the norm and rise rapidly with treatment. Only children who are *already* nearly proficient in the language would be expected to show such small gains from one year to the next.

The study strongly suggests that not only are many students unnecessarily enrolled in bilingual programs (at considerable expense), but that children stay in the programs longer than necessary and much longer than the model anticipates. As Rossell notes, while 72 percent of the students in the early-exit TBE programs had been reclassified as English proficient, only 17 percent had been mainstreamed into regular education. Only 26 percent of structured immersion students had been mainstreamed after three years.[30]

The study also found that bilingual educators frequently ignore the wishes of parents: Forty-one percent of parents whose children were in early-exit TBE programs wished their child to be taught only in English. Clearly, these children belonged in structured immersion.[31]

Finally, the advantages of structured immersion programs are understated by the analysis because more than two-thirds of students in these programs were classified as learning disabled, in contrast to 43 percent of early-exit and 17 percent of late-exit students.[32]

Rossell finds no support in the study for the theory that instruction in the native language facilitates learning English, but finds no support for the time on task principle either. The second theory of bilingual education, that native language instruction allows students to learn math and other subjects more rapidly, is also not supported. The amount of time in the classroom devoted to repetition, discussion, and drill varied little across the three program types. As Rossell writes, "The ability to use the student's native tongue does not cause the teachers to provide more complex instruction as measured in this study. Nor does it keep the students more engaged."[33]

Rossell proposes that Ramirez's raw data be reanalyzed as a function of instructional time in English, rather than of nominal program types. The data presented in the Ramirez study suggest that structured immersion programs result in the highest academic achievement, and early-exit TBE programs in the lowest achievement.[34] Late-exit programs with the most Spanish resulted in achievement levels between those of the other two instruction types. Rossell, however, cautions that none of these findings can be relied on given the problems with the report.

In sum, the research on bilingual education raises troubling questions about the effectiveness of the governmentally mandated design. Would other instructional designs prove significantly more effective at equipping Boston's language minority children with the basic academic skills to succeed in school and in the job market? The school day is finite. Should parents of LEP students be able to choose how much their children's education emphasizes native language skills, the child's native culture, and mastery of English?

Alternatives to TBE

While Massachusetts state law mandates transitional bilingual education, elsewhere other instructional designs for LEP children have shown promising results. The Fairfax County, Virginia, school district, one of the country's 10 largest, has since 1975 provided ESL programs for thousands of LEP students. Even though the students enrolled in the program are not taught in their native language, the U.S. Office for Civil Rights decided after a five-year investigation to give official approval to the program. After leaving the program, most students perform at or above grade level. In a 1988 analysis, 80 percent of students were determined to be proficient in English within two years of joining the program.[35] Critics of the Fairfax plan have claimed that its students are drawn from upper-middle-class families and discounted the program's results. Yet, today, approximately 40 percent of Fairfax's LEP students are poor enough to be eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches.[36]

The Berkeley, California, school district was one of the first in the country to provide extra help to language minority children. Today, the district offers both bilingual and ESL pull-out programs to students in kindergarten through grade 6. The Spanish bilingual program provides instruction in Spanish with increasing English through sixth grade; two middle schools provide sheltered (simplified English) subject matter classes. Most bilingual students remain in the program for seven years. The ESL program offers intensive pull-out classes and tutoring, but students spend approximately 88 percent of their time in the regular classroom. In the 1989 case *Teresa P. v. Berkeley Unified School District*, a group of Hispanic parents sued the district, alleging that the school district had an inferior, and thus unconstitutional LEP program; not all of the teachers in its language program held specialized ESL or bilingual credentials and, they argued, the district employed an insufficient number of native-tongue teachers and tutors. The plaintiffs also alleged "the failure to provide students' instruction in academic subjects in the students' primary language sufficient to sustain academic achievement."[37] However, extensive evidence failed to substantiate the plaintiffs' claims that the district needed to provide more primary-language instruction to assure the rights of the district's LEP children.

Rossell has compared standardized tests administered to Berkeley students in the spring of 1987 with the previous year's results, after statistically adjusting for all variables that might influence achievement, including ethnicity, social class, age, and number of years in the program. The data on two different tests—an English proficiency test and a test of basic skills—showed no significant difference between TBE and ESL. Gains in English proficiency and reading, language, and math achievement were similar in both programs. But in 1987–88 the district was pressured by the California Department of Education to increase the use of the student's native language in bilingual instruction. A comparison of achievement test scores from 1987 to 1988 found that bilingual education had a significant and adverse effect on achievement in reading, language, and math. Despite the ESL pull-out students' participation in total submersion (not structured immersion) for nearly 90 percent of their school time, they achieved substantially more than their counterparts in bilingual programs.

One last question must be examined, one that is especially pertinent to the applicability of Berkeley's findings to other districts, such as Boston. What if Berkeley's bilingual programs were poorly implemented, or the ESL pull-out programs were atypically strong? Then the conclusions would not be generalizable. But Berkeley's bilingual programs had already been cited as exemplary by the California Department of Education. Rossell performed identical test comparisons between Berkeley's ESL programs and bilingual education programs in two other districts, San Jose and Fremont. The state department of education had identified Fremont's program as exemplary, and Fremont and San Jose were the only two districts cited by Stephen Krashen and Douglas Biber, in their 1988 book on bilingual education, to be outstanding in all regards.[38] The comparison found no significant differences between the reading achievement of Berkeley's LEP students and those of the other two districts. Berkeley LEP students, however, did significantly better in math than students in either San Jose or Fremont. In short, Rossell found no basis for the claim that the district operates a poor bilingual education program.[39]

By the same token, if the goal is English-language skills, then the Berkeley ESL pull-out is *not* an exemplary practice. In the ESL design, as Rossell notes, students are initially taught for no more than one-fifth of their day in English keyed to their current comprehension. The balance of their time is spent in the regular classroom, in the supposedly discredited submersion mode. It is a reasonable conjecture that if students were taught in English at a level appropriate to their understanding for most or all of the day, as in structured immersion programs, achievement in reading and English skills would dramatically outpace that of the TBE model. While the time on task principle is strongly suggestive, little is known about how structured immersion programs would perform in the United States because bilingual education advocates have consistently prevented their adoption.

Even ardent TBE advocates, however, concede that Canada's French immersion programs are successful on a large scale. Monolingual English speakers are taught entirely in French in the earliest grades and by sixth grade they are taught in English and French in about equal proportions. These students develop substantial French skills, and their English and math achievement is at the same level as students taught in English exclusively. Hakuta suggests that the proliferation of this method of bilingual teaching is a testament to its success.[40] Two-way bilingual education, in which English speakers also master the language of their LEP classmates, has also proven effective, though it is particularly costly. The Hernandez school in Boston offers two-way Spanish bilingual education and is highly regarded by parents and educators, although no one knows the program's effects on academic achievement in either English or Spanish of its LEP or English-speaking students.

TBE Enrollment in Boston

The number of students in Boston's bilingual education program is increasing rapidly (table 9-1). The largest language groups are Spanish, Haitian, and Chinese.[41]

TABLE 9-1
BILINGUAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENT IN
THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1983–1992

	1983–84	%	1987–88	%	1991–92	%
Spanish	3,986	54.2	4,477	54.2	5,428	56.3
Haitian	520	7.1	1,022	12.4	1298	13.5
Chinese	872	11.9	980	11.9	1049	10.9
Cape Verdean	541	7.3	653	7.9	857	8.9
Vietnamese	402	5.5	458	5.5	649	6.7
Other	1,035	14.1	672	8.1	365	3.8
Bilingual Enrollment	7,356		8,262		9,646	
Total Enrollment	54,468		54,765		58,263	
%Bilingual		13.5		15.1		16.6

Source: Bilingual Education Department, Boston Public Schools, 25 February 1992.

The number of students in bilingual education programs statewide is also increasing. The Massachusetts Department of Education estimates that the number of LEP students in the state is increasing by 3,000 students per year. In 1990, the 50 districts with TBE programs reported a total of 36,427 students in 18 different language categories. Spanish speakers are by far the largest group, with 62 percent of the total TBE population. In 1987 there were 15,150 Spanish-speaking TBE students; in 1990 there were 22,540.[42]

TABLE 9-2
FTE TEACHING POSITIONS IN THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1986–1992

	FTE Teachers				
	Regular	Bilingual	Special	Other	Total
1986–87	2721	456.5	781	299	4257.5
%	64.0	10.7	18.3	7.0	
1987–88	2709.5	480.5	835	344	4369.0
%	62.0	11.0	19.1	7.9	
1988–89	2642	479.5	863	388	4372.5
%	60.4	11.0	19.7	8.9	
1989–90	2480.5	504	887.5	352	4224.0
%	58.7	11.9	21.0	8.3	
1990–91	2392.2	509	929	322.5	4160.7
%	57.5	12.2	22.3	7.7	
1991–92	2368.5	537.5	946.5	410.5	4263.0
%	55.6	12.6	22.2	9.6	

	Change in FTE Teaching Positions			
	Regular	Bilingual	Special	Other
1986–87	143.9	9.5	30	-9
1987–88	-11.5	24	54	45
1988–89	-67.5	-1	28	44
1989–90	-161.5	24.5	24.5	-36
1990–91	-88.3	5.0	41.5	-29.5
1991–92	-23.7	28.5	17.5	88

Source: Boston Municipal Research Bureau, 17 March 1992.

The number of bilingual education teachers increased commensurately. In Boston, the number of bilingual teachers grew by 32 percent from 1984 to 1992.[43] As with special education, the growth is at the expense of regular education programs. Over the same period, the regular education teaching force decreased by 203.6 FTE positions.[44] Meanwhile, the seniority system ensured that virtually no new teachers were hired for regular education programs. Only in bilingual and special education has the district hired teachers, as table 9-2 illustrates.

Bilingual education is expensive. Advocates of bilingual education rarely consider its costs. But like special education, bilingual education is an entitlement program, and enrollment is rapidly increasing. As shown in chapter 8, this takes resources from regular education. Maximum bilingual class sizes are dictated by the Lau remedies, while teacher contracts set much higher limits for regular education class size. State regulations mandate a student-teacher ratio of no greater than 18 to 1, or 25 to 1 if an aide is assigned to the classroom.[45] Spending per student for bilingual education is therefore higher than for regular education. In Boston, the per-pupil instructional cost for bilingual education is $6,009 annually, versus $5,209 for regular education students.[46]

When bilingual education advocates propose program modifications, they seldom seem to consider the implications for non-LEP children. Ramirez et al. decry the lack of fluent English speakers in the second language acquisition programs they reviewed, and emphasize the importance of LEP children interacting with English-speaking students. But such classes are conducted primarily in another language, and the authors of the report offer no suggestion for how the fully English-proficient (FEP) student's loss of learning time would be overcome. The same problem applies to structured immersion programs, where the teacher sticks to simplified English. FEP students would learn less than their peers in the regular classroom.

While Hakuta acknowledges the lack of scientific evidence of TBE's effectiveness, he nevertheless argues that *all* students, including fluent English speakers, should be enrolled in two-way bilingual programs for their entire school careers.[47] As Howard Gardner has written, "When the evidence is the weakest—on the case for bilingual programs—[Hakuta] ends up drawing the strongest, and least warranted, conclusions."[48] Universal bilingualism, Hakuta argues, would reinforce social solidarity, convey a life-enriching asset, and allow LEP students to capitalize on their own natural resource.[49] But a national goal of bilingualism would not win broad support, and Hakuta does not address how the program's immense cost would be borne.

Critique of TBE

Criticisms have been made of transitional bilingual education; many are applicable to Boston's TBE program. They include overenrollment, the late exit to regular classes by TBE students, insufficient English instruction, inadequate preparation to participate in the mainstream economy, questionable claims of extra-academic benefits, and the charge that bilingual education is an employment system.

The number of students in bilingual programs in the United States is increasing dramatically. According to a 1980 study cited by Hakuta, the number of public school students in bilingual programs will have increased 35 percent by the year 2000.[50] If the trends of the last decade continue, 21 percent of BPS students will be enrolled in bilingual programs by then.[51]

Are too many children being placed in bilingual programs? According to one federal report, up to 60 percent of Spanish-speaking children placed in bilingual education programs have stronger English-language skills than native-language skills.[52] Misclassification has been highlighted in numerous federal reports. In Texas, one study revealed that students who spoke only English and were living with parents who occasionally spoke Spanish were classified as "limited-English." One survey of a Cherokee community showed that while 48 percent of the children were evaluated to be LEP, 82 percent knew *only* English. In a study conducted in California, only half of the Hispanic students labeled LEP were more proficient in Spanish than English.[53] The AIR study of 1977–78 concluded that less than a third of the students enrolled in bilingual programs had limited English-speaking ability.[54] A sample of school districts in California found that only half of the students categorized as LEP were in fact more fluent in their native language than in English. In one of these districts, 40 percent of the students classified as bilingual spoke no Spanish at all.[55] Similar surveys of other districts receiving federal funds for bilingual programs have found that many of the students identified for bilingual education do not need it. The consequences of these practices are disturbing: Children are rationed instruction in the basic English-language skills that afford them the best opportunity to thrive in the mainstream economy, instructional costs climb, and children are, in effect, resegregated by ethnic background.

Does Boston over-identify students for bilingual education as well? While no studies have been conducted, the state's eligibility criteria encourage overenrollment. Any children "who were not born in the United States whose native tongue is a language other than English . . . [or] who were born in the United States of non English speaking parents" and "who are incapable of performing ordinary classwork in English" are referred to the program.[56] Once a child is enrolled, the parent must write to the school committee before the child can be returned to the regular classroom. Since the enrollment criteria rely on the language of the parent, not the child, many children who are merely doing poorly in school may be referred to the program.

Are Boston students retained in bilingual programs too long? Are the programs succeeding in educating these children and in preparing them to lead productive lives? In 1990–91, the annual dropout rate for Hispanics was 19 percent, compared to 13.6 percent for blacks, 9.8 percent for whites, and 7 percent for Asians. The systemwide dropout rate was 13.1 percent.[57]

In 1985, Charles Glenn undertook an analysis of Boston's transitional bilingual education programs in an effort to understand why the schools were failing to educate Hispanic children. Glenn had worked aggressively for the state's pioneering bilingual education law, but had come to question whether the mandated instructional model of TBE was meeting the needs of the growing number of LEP students. Glenn noted that in the *Lau* ruling, the Supreme Court had stated,

> Basic English skills are at the very core of what these public schools teach. . . . Any ability grouping or tracking system employed by the school system to deal with the special language skill needs of national origin minority children must not operate as an educational deadend or permanent track.[58]

Was Boston's program operating as such an educational deadend? Student progress is measured by the four Lau "steps," gradual degrees of mainstreaming with their English-speaking peers. Of the 32 elementary bilingual programs, serving a total of 4,437 students, only seven had any students at the highest step, "mainstreaming with continuing support." Only 17 schools reported any students at the second highest step, "partial mainstreaming."

Glenn analyzed the status of each of the 1,485 students then enrolled in Boston's 16 middle school (grades 6–8) bilingual programs. Of the 1,485 students, 485, or one in three, had been in bilingual programs for *six* or more years. Fully 46 percent of the Spanish-speaking students had been in bilingual programs for six or more years.[59] In principle, these students should have been working half in English and half in their native languages in the second year of their schooling, mostly in English in their third year, and entirely in English thereafter. Yet after six or even eight years, they were still segregated in a bilingual program.

Of the middle school students who had been in bilingual education six years or longer, 37 percent were speaking their native language exclusively; in one school, the figure was 88 percent. Another 29 percent of the students were classified as speaking some English. Eight percent of students in bilingual education spoke English almost exclusively; in one school, 29 percent of students enrolled in bilingual education were speaking mostly English.[60] Forty-five percent of all students who had been in the program for six or more years were still at the first Lau step, i.e., in the bilingual program exclusively.

The data were equally disturbing at the high school level. At East Boston High School, 71 percent of all the students in the Italian bilingual program had been in it for eight or more years, though fewer than one in three were more fluent in Italian than English.

The situation was worse for students in the Spanish programs. Glenn concluded that it appeared that Boston's "bilingual programs both segregate them [Spanish-speaking students] *and* fail to teach a substantial proportion of them the skills which, according to the *Lau* decision, are essential."[61] These students are "educationally isolated far longer than contemplated by the Massachusetts Transitional Bilingual Education

Law," because the program either fails to teach them English, prevents them from rejoining the mainstream, or both. Other students, Glenn concluded, especially Greek- and Italian-speaking students, are retained in the bilingual program for years, apparently despite their mastery of an adequate level of English skills.[62]

In 1982, Boston had attributed the large number of students remaining in TBE beyond its intended course to the "incidence of special needs students, the entry of older-previously-unschooled and illiterate students, and the registration of large numbers of Southeast Asian refugees."[63] Yet the proportion of special needs students (excluding those in private school prototypes) in bilingual programs (12 percent) was *lower*, not higher, than that of the district as a whole (19 percent). The second factor, the entry of older students with defective prior schooling, is irrelevant, since the middle school data cited by Glenn pertain to students enrolled in Boston schools since the start of their schooling. The last proposed explanation makes even less sense. The "Asian refugees" had in large part been in the system for three years or less, and Asian students were the most rapidly mainstreamed. Glenn concludes,

> It seems more appropriate to look for an explanation for the low level of English-language skills attained by a disturbingly high proportion of the students—and especially Hispanic students—in bilingual programs in Boston . . . in the teaching strategies employed and in the messages which (perhaps unconsciously) are given to students about the importance of acquiring these skills, rather than in the characteristics of the students themselves. . . . It will not do to assume that they are incapable of mastering a second language in six or eight years of schooling.[64]

Does Boston continue to retain students beyond the program's three-year course? Unfortunately, the department was unable to provide more recent data.

Since educators disagree about the goal of bilingual education, they differ on the significance of students exiting the program later than the nominal three years. Jim Cummins contends that while children can learn English for social uses ("playground English") quickly, five or more years are required to learn academic subject matter in English.[65] Many adults who have studied in foreign countries or taken foreign-language classes find the claims of bilingual advocates hard to reconcile with their own experiences. Late-exit bilingual advocates dismiss these perceptions as based on "middle-class" experiences and therefore not applicable to disadvantaged children.

Advocates of reforming bilingual education offer a different interpretation of the poor achievement of LEP children in Boston and other districts. They argue that children are denied adequate English instruction in TBE programs, stay in them too long, and consequently are woefully underprepared to return to the regular classroom. The requirement that students be reading at grade level before joining their English-proficient peers perpetuates the cycle. Many students do not perform at grade level even if English is their native language. If, as Rosalie Porter has suggested, six years of instruction in TBE classes does not prepare students for regular classes, it is time to try something else.[66] One Boston headmaster explained his policy:

> I believe that all kids, after three years, should be mainstreamed—unless you can have a bilingual plan written for them where there is a particular exception, because of a diagnosed particular need that is unusual, exceptional. I think here at the _____School we do a pretty good job of that, but we don't have to. . . . Students become bilingual or they put themselves in great jeopardy.[67]

Since only some schools house bilingual programs, the court has had to make some exceptions to its policy of racial controls on student assignment. As a result, some parents keep their children in bilingual programs for well over three years because they fear their children, once mainstreamed, will be involuntarily assigned to a remote school to satisfy district quotas:

> It's supposed to be transitional, three years, and no more, unless the parent wants it. Well, the parents' perception of the _____ School is that it's a great place to be, that it's safe. . . . And therefore you have this crazy situation: kids getting through fifth grade who are perfectly able to go into the regular class, but the parents balk because if you take them out of bilingual, they'll have to go to a school they are assigned to. That's the wrong reason for being in bilingual.[68]

The bilingual law is a vivid example of how an inflexible, state-mandated educational policy poorly serves both local districts and their clients. The product of political compromise, the law leaves everyone in bilingual education, to varying measures, dissatisfied. Bilingual advocates, like Dr. Sonia Nieto of the University of Massachusetts, admit that they never wanted the program to be "transitional" in the first place: Parents, Nieto claims, want their children to be taught in their native language. "We must redefine the mainstream so it includes us," she insists.[69] Many TBE administrators will therefore not be held to task for so many students remaining in the program beyond three years. Like Nieto, many Hispanic teachers favor late-exit programs. Yet they are neither licensed to implement the instructional model they believe in and demonstrate its merit, nor will they commit to faithfully implementing the TBE model and promptly transitioning their students. Indeed, proponents of alternative methods like structured immersion are threatened with the loss of state funding if they openly challenge TBE's effectiveness.

The ultimate loser is, of course, the child: His parents may never have signed on to the program's goals and his teacher's commitment to them may be lackluster. The instructional design to which he is subjected is incoherent, the product of bureaucratic compromise. Yet parental subscription, teacher commitment, and a clear mission are all prerequisites for effective education.

Another frequent criticism of TBE is that students receive insufficient English instruction. Common sense tells us that to become proficient in a language we must practice it regularly. What better way to master a foreign language than to live in a country where it is spoken, working to understand and be understood? The time on task findings confirm that the most effective language programs are those that immerse students in the new language. But in Boston, according to the bilingual education department, students receive only ninety minutes a day of English instruction. Aside from occasional courses in art, music, or physical education, they are kept segregated from their English-speaking peers.[70] One headmaster expressed his frustration:

> One of the things I wanted to do this year was to decrease the number of courses that students get in their native language—instead of giving them one

> period of English, give them two periods. I had the Hispanic parents up here all over me about that: "Why are you doing this? These kids need their Spanish. This is their culture." But we are in the United States where they should be learning English. "But you are being insensitive, Mr. _____." I said, "They take one English class out of seven periods per day. They need more than that. . . . That is like my learning French for one period a day: I'm not going to learn it. . . . In order for me to become fluent in Spanish I had to go and meet people who were Spanish speaking. . . . If you don't do that, you are not going to learn. There is no mystery. It's like learning to play an instrument; you have to stay on it. You can't stop. If you stop shooting baskets, you don't become a good basketball player."[71]

Students who enroll in schools without TBE programs for their language groups often learn rapidly in the mainstream. As one principal observed,

> The only bilingual program we have is Spanish, but we do have kids that are Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian, and Chinese. And you know, there's no one [else] that speaks those languages, so those kids are totally immersed and learning fast.[72]

Another principal criticized the district's policy of retaining students in "transitional" bilingual programs. She described how her transitional kindergarten program, by switching early to all-English instruction, successfully mainstreams children by the first grade:

> What's prevalent in Boston is that the children go to a "bilingual school." They go to a school that has all grades from K through 5 bilingual. And the child goes from grade to grade in the programs—ends up staying in bilingual for five years, and sometimes six, unnecessarily, past the time that he or she needs to be in it. Our [bilingual] children are in kindergarten, and the growth they've made in the English language is just incredible. Their teacher spoke to them primarily in Creole with a little English [early in] the school year. She's now speaking to them entirely in English and they recognize the words. She'll have them again next year as five-year-olds [for second year kindergarten]. They will be ready to go into our [regular education] grade one.[73]

Critics argue that TBE students lack the necessary preparation to participate in the mainstream economy. It is plainly unfair to deny LEP students the opportunity to master this country's language of public discourse and influence. Latino bilingual advocates often argue that Spanish-speaking children need very little English to function in certain urban neighborhoods or regions of the country. But, as Porter asks, should Spanish-speaking children aspire to no more than this?[74] While all languages and dialects may be equal in some abstract sense, Noel Epstein has noted, "they certainly are not equal in the political, economic or social sense, whether one is referring to English dialects among English-speakers, Spanish vernaculars among Spanish-speakers, or minority languages in the general society." Standard English is no better, only more useful, to master in this country. To deny children the right to learn the primary language of the land as quickly as possible is to deprive them of their civil rights.[75]

By removing bilingual children from the regular classroom and limiting their exposure to English, we have resegregated the schools by language, and, as a consequence, by race and ethnicity. Many LEP children are eventually placed in regular education, having never learned English adequately. They often end up failing and being referred to special education or to the lowest academic tracks. According to one middle school principal,

> Very few kids graduate from a bilingual program. I try to mainstream as many kids as possible, because if kids can master the written language and the spoken language skills to be able to be mainstreamed before they go into high school, they have a much, much better likelihood of graduating. Kids who go into high school in the bilingual program, especially in the _____ School, are much more likely to drop out. There's a much greater emphasis on kids turning sixteen and getting jobs right away.[76]

Bilingual education advocates emphasize "empowerment" and "self-esteem." Yet truly empowering language-minority students would entail at least offering them the choice to intensively study the language that opens the door to a future in this country. In its current form, bilingual education actually reduces, rather than expands, access to future jobs and schooling.

Advocates of bilingual education claim its benefits extend well beyond English proficiency and include improved academic achievement, enhanced self-esteem, increased community involvement in education, and reduced dropout rates. But has TBE in fact accomplished these goals? The evidence is mixed. Alternative programs, were they permitted, might do as well or better. One indication that TBE does not improve academic achievement is that, as discussed above, students in TBE programs showed *less* gain in mathematics than students in structured immersion programs: Keith Baker and Adriana de Kanter concluded, in their review of the literature, that 14 percent of methodologically sound studies found TBE to be superior to submersion, 21 percent found it inferior, and 64 percent found no difference.[77] In comparison tests of TBE and English-only programs, students taught in Spanish were no more committed to school and learning, nor did LEP students taught in English manifest less self-pride or suffer from anomie or emotional distress.[78]

The Massachusetts Advocacy Center claims lower dropout rates for Boston students in bilingual classes than for their regular education peers of the same language group (1987–88 data).[79] A 1990-91 analysis by the BPS Department of Research and Development found that for four language groups—Chinese, French, Haitian, and Spanish—the annual dropout rates were lower than for students of the same language groups in regular education classes. But for all other language groups, the annual dropout rate was *higher* in bilingual programs than in regular education. Even for the four bilingual programs with lower rates, the difference was surprisingly small—less than four percentage points.[80]

Several facts should be noted. First, the rate is very high in both groups and the difference is slight. Second, TBE offers small class sizes with a mandated student-teacher ratio of 18 to 1. The privilege of small classes may alone account for these small gains. If the teachers' familiarity with the child's native language accounts for any remaining advantages of TBE, this benefit would accrue to structured immersion and other alternative LEP programs as well. Third, the lower dropout rate compared to children of the same language group in regular education may in part testify to TBE's *in*effectiveness: TBE children who have inadequate English skills may drop out on rejoining the mainstream.

Charges have been made that bilingual education is an employment system and that politics sullies the hiring of bilingual teachers in Massachusetts. While TBE's stated goal is to teach students English and mainstream them with their English-proficient peers, Rosalie Porter and others have charged that TBE administrators often hire Spanish-speaking teachers from their own cultural group with little regard for the teachers' English-language skills. For a time, activist administrators, intent on teaching the native language and culture at the expense of English instruction, gained control of the tests for bilingual teachers. Teachers were rigorously tested on their knowledge of native history and culture, but their English skills were ignored. Non-Hispanics with strong Spanish skills were thus excluded in favor of Hispanics who were weak in English.[81] Boston's Department of Bilingual Education claims that teachers are now assessed in both English and their native language.[82]

The state's certification requirements for bilingual teachers are another example of the folly of the state's bilingual program.[83] State law requires that bilingual teachers have a thorough knowledge of native language and culture, but only "communicative skills" in English. Yet if research on academic achievement, and not employment politics, informed the law, these requirements would be exactly reversed. Three different studies have found no difference in the achievement gains of LEP children taught by monolingual (English only) and bilingual teachers.[84] More remarkable still, another study found an *inverse* correlation between teacher competency and student performance. As Rossell and Ross have observed, this is because teacher "competency" is largely a measure of the teacher's skills in the native language. By this standard, "incompetent" teachers would use more English in class than "competent" teachers.[85] One principal of a school with a popular Spanish bilingual program said,

> I think there needs to be a much greater emphasis on the English-language fluency of bilingual teachers before they enter the system. Otherwise you end up with bilingual teachers who can't speak English themselves, yet are responsible for the English proficiency of their kids. I also think, though, that

there needs to be a lot more work done on cultivating respect for, and acceptance of, linguistic differences.[86]

If employment politics result in the district's hiring of teachers with poor English skills, how will their students obtain the language instruction they deserve? Once employed by the district, bilingual education teachers' interest in job security is inevitably at odds with the goal of rapidly moving students into the mainstream—an objective that teachers may never have subscribed to in the first place.

Multiculturalism and the Role of the School

The controversy over bilingual education is part of a larger debate over "multiculturalism," "ethnocentrism," and "Afrocentrism" in city schools. Few educators question the need for schools to pay significant attention to non-Western cultures, histories, and languages. In an increasingly diverse American society and an interdependent world, there is surely need to broaden the account of our nation's past to include the contributions and perspectives of all the diverse peoples that continue to forge our American identity. Much has already been done in Boston and other large districts to establish a multicultural curriculum. Great gains have been made in the accurate and sensitive treatment of the nation's minorities in textbooks. California undertook a comprehensive revision of its statewide curriculum, developing entirely new multicultural textbooks. New York State has adopted what is probably the most radical and controversial new curriculum, which explicitly aims to cultivate self-esteem in African-Americans. Some critics charge that it blatantly sacrifices historical accuracy and denigrates the country's Western European traditions in advancing its Afrocentric perspective.

Any history is inevitably nuanced, but certainly only the extremist contends that only blacks can write the history of slavery, or Native Americans that of early America.[87] To throw over any attempt at critical distance or factual truth in the curriculum in favor of a new ethnic subjectivity would be to do children a great injustice. All knowledge is not socially constructed. Children must learn the difference between education and sentiment; "before they are taught to feel, they must be taught to know."[88] The most extreme proposals are unlikely to win broad support. Sociologist Nathan Glazer has done well to remind us that this is not the first time that public school curricula and texts have been revised to accommodate the perspectives of ethnic groups, nor likely the last.[89]

If the goal is both to improve the educational opportunities for all children and to defuse racial and ethnic tensions, the best hope is to offer parents choice—the choice to send their children to schools that cater to their priorities, yet further the public interest embodied in the core curriculum. The district, the state, and the judiciary would do well to learn the lessons of the failed social engineering of the last decades. Despite tireless efforts of state and local officials, busing and other mandates have not improved educational quality for people of color. There is no need for policymakers to choose among multiculturalism, Afrocentrism, and assimilation. While each claims persuasively to be the best way of improving educational opportunity for students, no one approach is best for all. The best policy is for the district to let each new school determine its own mission and values, and to resist the urge to say what will and will not go.

One entrepreneurial school, for instance, might accept the premise that an awareness, even an emphasis, on racial and ethnic identities will encourage understanding by teaching students to "value diversity." Community will be created through, not in spite of, difference. Another school might adopt an Afrocentric curriculum on the grounds that black students will achieve more if their heritage is emphasized. In a kindergarten class in Baltimore, all the black boys were doing poorly. After discovering that each was being raised by a single mother, the school created a class just for them with a young, black male teacher who will remain with the boys through the fifth grade. The results: academic achievement, attendance, and behavior are all sharply improved. Similar programs in Miami are as successful. Other cities, including New York, Detroit, and Milwaukee, are also experimenting with the idea of all-male schools in black neighborhoods.[90]

The idea was first proposed by educator Spencer Holland, who posited that the social and educational failings of black boys from single-parent, female-headed households were tied to the absence of positive male role models. The teachers and principals of their elementary schools were frequently all women. No matter how nurturing, Holland argued, they did not constitute appropriate role models because the behavior associated with them was always viewed as feminine and therefore irrelevant to their lives. The male role models available to them had generally rejected educational achievement. And since, as research has established, those who fail to complete high school have already psychologically dropped out by the third grade, the cycle continues. Creating all-male schools, Holland urges, could provide young black boys with positive and literate black role models and help to reverse the boys' prevailing negative attitudes toward education.[91]

The NAACP, the ACLU, and the National Organization for Women have all opposed these plans, claiming they are discriminatory and resegregative.[92] But not all discrimination is vicious. A legitimate recognition of differences, in the service of sound pedagogy, is not such discrimination. Indeed, does the *state* have the right to discriminate against a group of parents who choose a school that acknowledges their particular needs? And do these organizations speak for their urban constituencies? Wisconsin's Polly Williams, Holland, and other leaders claim the ACLU is woefully out of touch with urban life. Black parents are fed up with the education their children receive in the city schools. Does anyone have the right, as Glazer has asked, "to stand four-square against these proposals, particularly when advanced by black advocates to overcome black student failure?"[93] In the entrepreneurial schools proposal, while schools would be barred from excluding students on racial grounds, they would be free to cater to the needs of specific groups of students.

A third entrepreneurial school might embrace assimilation. As one teacher said,

> When I talk about multicultural education, I am talking about finding the *similarities* in individuals that make it possible for them to form a community—whether it's a transient community, like the classroom, or a more permanent community—rather than talking about the richness of diversity and all of those catch phrases we use, like "diversity creates diversity." It creates difference and it creates problems. I think that's been a big problem with looking at multicultural and race issues: instead of saying "these are the ways in which

we are alike," advocates have emphasized difference and emphasized conflict.[94]

Certainly diversity should be valued in the classroom, the school's founders might argue, but should children be discouraged from learning the ways of the mainstream culture? The schools have traditionally been the path for children of immigrants to a better life. How will the hardening of ethnic boundaries and the segregation of children by language group lead to a more equitable society, or provide access to improved economic and educational opportunities?

Students must understand the American disease of racism, but, as Arthur Schlesinger has argued, public education should seek to strengthen, not weaken, the bonds that hold our nation together.[95] He reminds us that the reason the United States has avoided the destructive forces of ethnic separatism and dissolution that are undermining the republics of the Soviet Union and elsewhere is that it has so successfully assimilated the cultures of immigrants into a new, and continually evolving, American culture. Schlesinger warns us of the "danger of a society divided into distinct and immutable ethnic and racial groups, each taught to cherish its own apartness from the rest."[96] Indeed, he writes, the alternative to integration is disintegration.[97] The balance between *pluribus* and *unum* must be maintained.

As long as education remains under direct political control, there is little likelihood that schools will be free to realize these distinct missions. This problem is most visible in the acrimonious debate over bilingual education programs. Activists have fought vigorously against alternative educational methods that rely less on the native language. Their primary goal has been to reinforce ethnic identity, but because they could not win public support for this objective, they have feared to argue their case on these terms. As Linda Chavez has noted,

> They fear—correctly, I believe—that public financial support for bilingual education would evaporate if it were presented as a way to preserve the language and culture of a single ethnic group. It is not even clear that Hispanic parents would support bilingual education on such terms. Instead, advocates try to sell the program with the claim that it is both effective in teaching Hispanic children English and necessary to allow Hispanic children to keep up in

> school as they learn the language. . . . No other ethnic group, including the 250,000 immigrants who come here from Asia each year, is clamoring for the right to have its language and culture maintained in this country at public expense. Although Hispanics have succeeded in doing so—for the time being—theirs will be a Pyrrhic victory if it is gained at the expense of their ultimate social and economic integration.[98]

Some Hispanic leaders have seen officially mandated bilingual education as an opportunity to institutionalize and legalize their political struggle. Dr. Antonia Darder of California Polytechnic University contends that bilingual programs have been bastardized by the mainstream's emphasis on rapid transition into English-only classes. Speaking at a conference titled "The Education of Latino Children," Darder said, "We should name the problem for what it is! It's racism! We must rethink educational priorities, advocate for our children to become themselves, not engage in the rhetoric of compromise or appeasement."[99] Her anger is understandable. What could be more embittering than professing allegiance to one primary goal—the rapid mastery of English and early exit from the program—but in truth struggling for another—the inheritance of the native language and culture, and the longest possible retention in the program? They are as fundamentally incompatible as assimilation and separatism.

But is not teaching native cultures a function far beyond the traditional mission of the public schools? It is also a function for which a centralized government program seems particularly ill-suited. Should government's responsibilities, through the agent of the local schools, be ceaselessly expanded as other institutions of society weaken? Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus were the first to suggest that the decline of "mediating structures" between the individual and the government, including families, neighborhoods, churches, fraternal and voluntary associations, and ethnic and racial subcultures, was in part the unintended result of the expansion of government programs. Many current policies have vigorously upheld both individual rights and government action to further social justice, but have either been blind or inhospitable to the many agencies that mediate between the two.[100] In the areas of health, welfare, and education, many social services were once provided by such agencies. Now they have been taken over by centrally managed government bureaucracies or transformed into quasi-governmental agencies through governmental licensing, certification, funding, and regulation.[101] Berger and Neuhaus contend that "public policy should protect and foster mediating structures," which they see as vital in a democratic society.[102]

If they are right, then the expansion of the public school's agenda is ill-advised. It may only weaken already disadvantaged communities. Organizations outside the schools can better fulfill the goals of maintaining the native language and celebrating the native culture. When local or state bureaucracies undertake to create multicultural materials, as Linda Chavez has argued, the history and customs of distinct peoples are homogenized. After all, it is only in the United States that "Hispanics" exist; the culture of Argentina is quite different from that of Mexico.[103]

There are many local community organizations offering classes in native language and culture: Hebrew schools, Chinese Saturday schools for instruction in Mandarin as well as dance and poetry, Lithuanian schools for language and culture, and Hispanic after school programs, to name but a few.[104] The promotion of ethnic solidarity is best left to members of the community, who are unconstrained by bureaucratic rules and the politics of society at large.

Choice and Bilingual Education

There is ample doubt that Boston's current TBE program is meeting the requirements of the state's regulations, which state that TBE programs "shall be designed and conducted so that students enrolled in such programs can achieve skills in . . . English sufficient to perform ordinary classwork in English within the three-year transitional period."[105] One headmaster remarked,

> The goal is for kids to come in and stay a couple of years and then mainstream into regular education. They often don't. We have kids who remain in bilingual until they graduate. Some of these kids don't need it. The parents keep saying, "I want them there." . . . There is nothing I can do to get them out. . . . There needs to be more decision making on these issues at the school level.[106]

The Fifth Court of Appeals held in *Castaneda v. Pickard* (1981) that if a "school's program . . . fails, after being employed for a period of time sufficient to give the plan a legitimate trial, to produce results indicating that the language barriers confronting students are actually being overcome, that program may, at that point, no longer constitute appropriate action as far as that school is concerned."[107] Charles Glenn, as early as 1985, called for choice in LEP programs to improve the educational opportunities of language minority children:

> What may be needed above all is *flexibility* in developing a strategy to meet the educational needs of linguistic minority students, a strategy which will certainly include transitional bilingual education but which will provide long-term language maintenance in the native language only for those whose parents choose that. . . . And we will need the flexibility to be able to discuss what is in the best interest of students . . . without making unqualified support for the present system of bilingual instruction the test of good faith. While it is true that some institutional interests may appear threatened by such discussion, in the long term bilingual education itself can only benefit from taking its place among the freely chosen educational options in a . . . system which respects diversity.[108]

And what about TBE's clients? The little-known fact is that an extraordinary number of children in TBE programs today are in the wrong program either because they are proficient in English or because their parents would prefer less native-language instruction or none at all. In examining the Ramirez report, Rossell found that less than *half* of the kindergarten students enrolled in the TBE and immersion programs were considered to have only a beginning knowledge of English.[109] Furthermore, 41 percent of the parents of the children in early-exit TBE programs either wanted their child taught mostly in English, with Spanish to clarify, or only in English, according to a parent survey administered by Ramirez et al.[110] A 1988 survey of Latino parents conducted by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) found that only 19 percent approved of the school teaching their child a non-English language if that meant less time for teaching English. Moreover, only 19 percent would accept less time for math, and only 20 percent would support less time for science, if that were the consequence of teaching another language.[111] A large majority of parents thought it was the family's responsibility, not the school's, to teach children their ancestors' history and traditions. Puerto Rican and Mexican parents were the most likely to place the responsibility with the school.[112] Because parents have different views on the matter, the ETS report urges flexibility in program offerings: "To the extent that schools attend to parent preferences in their program development, it would appear that this study would call for some options in the types of special services available to language minority children."[113]

Not every LEP child will wish to maintain his native tongue, nor should lawmakers or the courts force him. As Rossell has argued, parents should be free to reach informed choices, recognizing that the school day is finite and tradeoffs must be made between mastery of English, maintenance of the native language, instruction in other subject matter, and education in native culture. The consumers of education would be protected: Each program's goals and the means used to obtain them would be clearly stated, and program outcomes fully disclosed.

With 145 different language groups in the nation's schools, it is impossible for one program to satisfy everyone's needs.[114] Choice can resolve the policy problem that no amount of further research or political debate can.

Before we can judge a program's effectiveness, we must first ask, effective at what? After all, a program's effectiveness will be greatly influenced by the degree to which it is driven by a singular mission to which its participants subscribe. As we have seen, there is reason to believe that subscription to the current programs, in the absence of choice, is low. Transitional bilingual education programs may have been unusually effective in initial sites where they were carried out by educators who believed in the program they had developed. However, research has shown that the primary reason later sites rarely replicate a project's initial success is the lack of spirited ownership on the part of participants. Choice, by replacing rule making with commitment, can greatly improve the odds of success.

Choice will also free educators to state their program's priorities clearly; real and stated missions will be one and the same. Is the goal of their TBE program truly transition or is it maintenance of the native language? Is the native language used to keep children from falling behind in other subjects or to create functional bilinguals? Is self-esteem to stem primarily from ethnic validation or from academic accomplishment? Is the greater imperative to reinforce the home culture or to prepare the student for new opportunities outside of it? As Rossell has written,

> Parents . . . should be told the truth about bilingual education and its goals. A bilingual maintenance program is offered not because it is the best way to learn English, the objective of the federal and state legislation, but because it is a good way to become bilingual, and there are parents who want their child to be bilingual. . . . The case for bilingual education should not have to rest on its effectiveness in teaching English, but on its effectiveness in making children bilingual. The bilingual advocates have confused these two goals.[115]

Wherever choice is established, programs will gain character and clarity. Program designs that have been compromised would be purified, as Porter has suggested. "Progressive" educators will bring language into the classroom and emphasize an ethnocentric curriculum. Activities and lessons will stress the child's background, folklore, and emotional response. "Pragmatists" will concentrate on making the mainstream language and culture accessible to the underprivileged and stress literacy and demanding subject matter. Still others will contend that the best of both approaches can be combined.[116] In the end, the choice will be made by parents, and will be a deeply personal one.

LEP Education in Boston under Choice

If educators could launch distinctive schools in Boston and parents could choose from among them, parents of LEP students could opt for transitional bilingual education schools, structured immersion schools, or two-way bilingual schools. Other schools might design still different pedagogies. Schools would be required to provide children with the English skills they need to function in American society. This would be accomplished through the core curriculum. All schools would participate in assessments of English proficiency. The non-English language curricula would be regarded as curricular extensions, just like specialty schools' music, art, health care, business, and other programs.

Funding for the new schools would be by capitation, just as for the other entrepreneurial schools, but with a per-student supplement, since LEP students are more costly to educate. Schools offering LEP programs could admit regular education students, but at the usual rate.

To permit the new entrepreneurial schools to establish a diversity of LEP programs, the state must first amend the current bilingual education law, Chapter 71A. The law's guarantee of special assistance to language minority students should be sustained. But rather than mandate a particular instructional model, the law should give districts the flexibility to design programs that best meet the needs of their community. The federal government has already recognized the need for such flexibility: The Bilingual Education Act of 1988 directs up to one-quarter of federal funding to TBE alternatives.[117]

Were new schools free to offer such alternatives, and parents free to choose relatively short-duration (and thus less expensive) programs, the district would realize substantial savings that would then be available to strengthen regular education. According to one estimate, if all students exited after three years of TBE classes, $760,000 could be saved annually.[118] If children who are stronger in English than in their native language were enrolled in the regular classroom, the savings would be greater still. Boston's language minority parents are ready to make such choices. As one principal explained,

> Our Hispanic students . . . have shown incredible gains as a result of having been in the McCormack School's two-way mainstream program. That's what you want: You want to have people zealously trying to get their kids in. On the other hand, with that popularity comes real responsibility. I'd like to be able to say that the school department is always supportive of this success. That has not been the case.[119]

Perhaps no program better exemplifies the failure of political control of urban education in Boston—and more vividly reveals the gains in both student achievement and teacher satisfaction that true school choice would deliver. No program better underscores why Boston's staff—teachers and administrators alike—need the freedom to come together "by choice, not assignment" to teach the way they believe is right. Today, staffing rules make this impossible. No reform, then, is more urgent than reconsidering every aspect of the system's personnel practices. People and the workplace are the subject of the final chapter.

CHAPTER TEN

Personnel

ANY ORGANIZATION is only as good as its people. Nowhere is this more true than in a school: the quality of the teachers is what counts. Yet the legislature, the courts, the unions, and Boston's district administration have erected myriad obstacles that thwart the city's schools in their efforts to recruit the very best human talent. From the training of future teachers to the termination of incompetent ones, the schools operate under personnel constraints that the manager of a private company would never accept—so quickly would they drive the firm out of business.

Training

Boston's student enrollment is increasing, as is the average age of its teachers. Many new teachers will soon be needed. Attracting the best to the city and preparing them for the challenges of today's classroom are the vital first steps in remaking our troubled schools. Massachusetts law limits the pool of candidates to applicants who have earned (or are about to obtain) a degree in teaching. Unfortunately our schools of education are one of the weakest links in the public educational system. Much of what is wrong in our public schools today—the trivialization of course content, the insistence on "relevance," the lowering of expectations, the devaluing of facts and knowledge—emanates from education schools.

No wonder then, that education reform proposals in many states have called for alternative paths to certification that limit the exposure of prospective teachers to these schools. One need only visit a few classes at an education school to understand that the way teachers are trained must be radically changed if the decline of the American public schools is ever to be reversed. Seemingly blind to the failure of the educational policies of the sixties and seventies, many educationalists continue to pursue their mission of social leveling, violating common sense and ignoring the needs of those they claim to serve.

The current education school dogma has evolved over the last century and was partly an outgrowth of the movement toward "progressive" education. The progressivists began with the laudable goal of finding ways to motivate children. Active learning through experience, they argued, should replace passive instruction from the chalkboard.[1] To engage students from all backgrounds, teachers should replace "sterile" academic curricula with subjects "relevant" to the students' own lives, expand elective courses, and emphasize "free expression" rather than grammar and academic discipline. They believed such reforms would democratize education and ensure equal educational opportunity. But today, the failure of these policies to achieve their pedagogical and social objectives has not dissuaded the educationalists. Secluded in the halls of academia, where they are guaranteed a flow of impressionable disciples, the developers of these policies are impervious to their results. Many public schools, realizing that they went terribly wrong, have reemphasized academic basics in recent years. Yet while schools were rebuilding the walls they had been urged to take down, and reintroducing the traditional subjects they had been exhorted to take out, the educationalists have profited from the time to refine their proposals to their most extreme—and sometimes absurd—forms.

Of course filling in a single word or circling an answer are anti-intellectual tasks. They must never substitute, as they too often do, for real writing. But to an outsider, the schools of education seem to be parodying themselves—especially when they offer courses like "Puppetry," "Discovering Your Teaching Self," and "Lifestyle of the Secondary Student." A University of Washington report describes a professor who gave students a *Mademoiselle* survey to fill out.[2] The search for the least demanding courses of study has reached its logical conclusion. "Facts" are now held in low esteem, and knowledge is devalued. Instead, education school professors rhapsodize about "higher-order thinking," "discourse learning," and "learning how to learn." Teachers are admonished for lecturing; education students are told that one never learns anything by being "told" it. All knowledge must be "discovered" for oneself. In science class, for example, facts and formulas are out; students must, through "inquiry learning," become scientists and, like so many Einsteins, chance upon each principle themselves. Teachers are "facilitators," never sources of information; students must create their own knowledge; there are no right or wrong answers.[3] Education school students who will soon teach in our schools listen intently to their teachers and diligently write down these propositions, oblivious to the irony of the situation.

The second major component of the education school orthodoxy is that students must be indoctrinated with "self-esteem." Self-esteem is viewed as a panacea. In the words of the much-publicized California Department of Education task force report, *Toward a State of Esteem*, self-esteem is "the likeliest candidate for a *social vaccine* . . . something that empowers us to live responsibly and that inoculates us against the lures of crime, violence, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, child abuse, chronic welfare dependency and educational failure."[4] The report includes discussions on "Appreciating Our Worth and Importance" and "Affirming Accountability for Ourselves." It recommends that for teachers, "course work in self-esteem . . . be required for credentials" and that every California student be required to study "positive self-esteem, conflict resolution, effective communication, goal setting and goal achievement, time and money management, creative problem solving, leadership, stress management, and decision making."[5]

Why does the education school dogma go largely unchallenged? In part, it is because the education schools are pervasively mediocre institutions, which attract mediocre students. Once arrived, students are swathed in a "feel good" culture where "equity" is the ultimate virtue. Since education students are often low achievers themselves, they are likely to feel right at home in a culture that denigrates competition, achievement, accountability, and testing. As Rita Kramer concludes in her 1991 ethnography of 15 education schools,

> Testing, in the education school world, is almost as bad as "tracking." No one wants to know the actual results of these policies—whether they really help poor students, how they affect the bright and the gifted. The ed school establishment is more concerned with politics—both academic and ideological—than with learning.
>
> Since what matters is not whether . . . anyone has learned anything, but that no one fails to pass, the threshold is lowered as required for almost anyone to get by—in the schooling of teachers as well as in the schools in which they will teach. After all, special methods, not specific subject matter, is what they will be expected to demonstrate.[6]

In education school jargon, facts and knowledge are known derisively as "subject matter." Much time is spent in small seminars ostensibly discussing pedagogy; students are encouraged to pontificate on subjects about which they know almost nothing. Never mind whether what is said is right or wrong; they are "expressing" themselves, "exploring how they feel." Teaching methods monopolize the curricula; the focus is on *how* to teach, never *what* to teach. All knowledge is equal, after all; to assert otherwise is "elitist," "racist," and "Eurocentric." Besides, since knowledge in today's information age is "endlessly expanding," it is futile to try to teach children facts; the job is to teach them how to learn so at some future moment they can avail themselves of relevant information. As Chester Finn writes, this amounts to

> . . . conceptualizing in a state of ignorance akin to pure opinion, as in those thousand wasted classes where students are asked to express their feelings or make "decisions" about things they do not begin to understand. . . . The man in the street recognizes that even the agile mind is useless when empty, that opinions without foundations are mere prejudices, and that the most dazzling theory is valueless if one possesses no reality against which to test it. The only place this view is rejected is within the encapsulated world of education. . . . Knowledge has become a problem for educators, a minefield to be stepped carefully through when not avoided altogether. If you tread on a bit of information it can explode in your face, with someone like Professor [James] Banks demanding to know the race and motive of whoever constructed that fact,

> Professor [Mary] Diez asking who had the temerity to select it among all possible facts, and Professor [John] Goodlad asking whether the society within which it is used is governed by a fully participatory political system.[7]

Educationalists are wary of any attempt to set standards for what children should know, perceiving it as an attack on "critical thinking"—as if one could think critically with nothing to think about. Yet public school teachers have a responsibility to impart the factual knowledge their students need to live productive lives.

The notion that children can be inoculated from all social ills merely by pumping up their self-esteem is equally irresponsible. Showering children with happy face stickers or draping schools in banners reading "WE APPLAUD OURSELVES" is no solution for poor student achievement.[8] Self-esteem cannot be legislated. The education schools seem to have forgotten that real self-worth comes from accomplishment—from putting a skill to work, from ***knowing*** something. "Self esteem," Robert Hughes has written, "comes from doing things well, from discovering how to tell a truth from a lie and finding out what unites us as well as what separates us."[9] The educationalists seem determined to deny children their first taste of achievement. In his prescient 1979 study of American culture, Christopher Lasch found the "culture of narcissism" to be prevalent in the education system:

> Efforts to extend techniques first perfected by teachers of the "new math" into the social sciences and humanities produced students deficient in factual knowledge and intolerant of instruction that did not address their need for "creativity" and "self-expression." . . .
>
> Evidence of the spread of such methods and of their disastrous effect on the students' minds could be cited in profusion. Under cover of enlightened ideologies, teachers (like parents) have followed the line of least resistance, hoping to pacify their students and to sweeten the time they have to spend in school by making it as painless as possible. Hoping to avoid confrontation and quarrels, they leave the students without guidance, meanwhile treating them as if they were incapable of serious exertion.[10]

The educationalists' principles once realized in the classroom not only patronize students, but undermine the professed goal of promoting self-esteem. Consider "discovery" or "inquiry learning." Clearly, hands-on investigation is an important method of learning. But to suggest that students should learn *only* this way is ridiculous. Did not these professors, as students themselves, learn most of what they know by reading books, studying "facts," and attending lectures—that is, from the much-maligned methods of "didactic teaching"? When they need to familiarize themselves quickly with a subject, do they not turn to competent texts? By urging that these means to knowledge be withheld from children, they repudiate their own education and the opportunities it afforded them. Children are smart enough to know that they have a lot to learn from their adult teachers, smart enough to know that they are unlikely to stumble across the laws that took the rare genius of a Newton a lifetime to formulate. Students are not so lacking in dignity that they will not see through the charade of being led, like toddlers, to "discover" scientific truths just before the bell sounds. Rita Kramer writes of one teacher who proudly told how she "waited for [her] children to get the idea themselves that a piece of graph paper corresponding to the square patterned floor of the classroom could be used to make a diagram of the room. 'It took them three days to figure it out.'"[11] One would be hard-pressed to think of a better way to insult the students' intelligence and undermine their self-respect.

The methods expounded by the educationalists are ostensibly intended to improve educational opportunity and redress social injustices. In practice, they may have the opposite effect: By denying their students basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic, by failing to insist that children master a basic curriculum of history, science, English, math, and the arts, they condemn children to a life on the sidelines. By creating tests that every student will pass, and by eliminating objective standards—a rude reminder that not everyone does equally well—schools fail to prepare students for a competitive world in which they will have to deal with the pain of failure along with the joy of success.

Boston's best schools are those that have discarded education school dogma. Students at Bob Martin's school love the World Institute for Computer-Assisted Teaching (WICAT) system, a drill-and-practice software program that has no pretensions to "higher-order thinking" or "discovery learning." It teaches facts, and children at the McCormack—as everywhere WICAT is in use—can be found glued to the screen, relishing the challenge of testing themselves against the machine. Not surprisingly, the school has the highest reading scores in the city and parents are clamoring to enroll their children.[12] But at the education schools, some professors scoff at this sort of method. In some courses on educational technology, drill-and-practice systems are noticeably absent from the curriculum. WICAT is held up as everything educational software should not be, because it encourages rote learning and memorization of facts, rather than "higher-order thinking."

As Lasch notes, just as educators were rallying to the slogan of "relevance," black parents

> clung to what seems today an old-fashioned—from the point of view of educational "innovators," a hopelessly reactionary—conception of education. According to this supposedly traditional view, the school functions best when it transmits the basic skills on which literate societies depend, upholds high standards of academic excellence, and sees to it that students make these standards their own. The struggle for desegregated schooling implied an attack not only on racial discrimination but on the proposition . . . that academic standards are inherently elitist and that universal education therefore requires the dilution of standards—the downward adjustment of standards to class orientation and social expectations.[13]

Prospective urban teachers are instructed to question the importance of traditional subject matter; the result is cultural deprivation. In the name of egalitarianism, Lasch argues, radical reformers who "condemn academic standards as part of the apparatus of white cultural control" join reactionaries who claim that "poor people cannot hope to master the intricacies of mathematics, logic, and English composition" in condemning students to a mediocre schooling. The self-described reformers, thus, "help to perpetuate the very inequality they seek to abolish."[14]

Of course, the educationalists' pseudo-radicalism panders to the weaknesses of their own students. It is an uncomfortable fact that education school students have often themselves fared poorly on standardized tests like the SAT and in the competitive college admission process.[15] Many find the education schools a haven from the pressures of more selective institutions and are eager to eliminate selection mechanisms they find oppressive—standards, grading, testing, and tracking. The culture of the education schools, where no one fails, is attractive to students for whom academic competition is a painful memory. So is the union culture and the "equity" ethos prevalent in large districts. The union's premise that all teachers must be treated equally, regardless of performance, seems tailor-made for those whose academic performance was undistinguished. Once in their own classrooms, these new teachers are eager to realize their professors' proposals and create a fictional world where, as in Lake Wobegon, all children are exceptional.

The most prestigious education schools are primarily concerned with spewing out vast numbers of articles and proposals. Too many are unreadable, dressing up the obvious in lofty jargon, or obscure and irrelevant. The smaller education schools are free of the pretension that they are research institutions. But they train their students in modish pedagogical methods that teachers later say were largely a waste of time. As one Boston teacher said,

> I don't think I learned in college what good teaching was. It just gave me permission to go out and find out. Like when you get your driver's license: you don't really know how to drive when you get your license—it just allows you to go out and learn. Until you've had your first 20,000 miles you don't know how to drive and until you've had your first classroom for a couple of years, you don't know how to teach.[16]

If the legislature is sincere about improving education in Boston and other districts, it should no longer allow the education school establishment to dictate who will be hired to teach.

Certification

To rebuild Boston's schools the district must persuade the very best people from all walks of life to become teachers. Some of these teachers will have just graduated from college and intend to commit their professional lives to teaching, while others will be business people, homemakers, and computer programmers eager to join in remaking the urban schools. Still others will be retirees who want to devote their energies to the challenge of teaching. The state's current certification requirement of a master's degree in education is counterproductive and discourages good people from entering the profession.

Massachusetts should immediately adopt a truly alternative route to certification. New Jersey's pioneering program, which encourages liberal arts college graduates to become teachers, provides an encouraging example. These college graduates are immediately dispatched to the classroom, where they are assigned to a mentor teacher for one month. After this apprenticeship, the new teacher works under the close supervision of a support team that includes other teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialists. In their first school year, they receive two hundred hours of evening and weekend instruction from experienced practitioners on pedagogy, lesson planning, discipline, test design, and managing their classrooms. They must pass the National Teacher Examination by year end; then they are certified to teach in the subject of their college major.[17]

In its first four years (1985–89), New Jersey's Provisional Teacher Program attracted 6,800 applicants—more than the state's education schools. Twenty-nine percent of the new teachers hired in 1988–89 were provisional teachers. During the four-year period, 30 percent of the provisional teachers taught in the high-demand fields of math and science.[18] Twenty-one percent of teachers who received alternative certification were minorities, compared to 11 percent of all New Jersey's teachers.[19] According to the New Jersey Department of Education, 93 percent of these alternative certification candidates passed the National Teacher Examinations, compared with 86 percent of education school graduates. The Council for Basic Education determined that these provisionally certified candidates performed, on average, "significantly higher . . . than . . . those who have received standard certification."[20] Moreover, these teachers have proven to be more committed than the teachers with traditional teacher training; the rate of attrition for the provisional teachers was only 4 percent after one year, compared to 18 percent for teachers who attended education schools.[21]

Massachusetts offers three "alternative" routes to certification. To approve teacher candidates who lack the standard credentials, a Certification Review Panel was established in 1987. All the options, however, entail instruction in education school pedagogy: the Apprentice Teacher Program merely provides for completing the conventional requirements outside of the traditional sequence; the Waiver option is only exercised when a position in a shortage area cannot be filled by a qualified candidate; candidates for Internship teaching programs are only certified when they lack but two courses for traditional certification. In 1989–90, only 65 people were certified by the panel, 9,133 through the traditional path.[22]

While most states have adopted alternative means to certification, only a small number of those interested in passing through these programs can do so. Between 1985 and 1990, they account for only about 1 percent of new teachers nationwide. Even in New Jersey, only 1,500 out of more than 7,000 applicants were certified. Many states have allowed education schools to control the programs, with predictable results. Other states have imposed restrictions limiting the programs' availability to subject areas in which teacher shortages exist.[23]

A true alternative certification plan for Massachusetts would threaten the monopoly of the education schools, and the teachers' unions would probably oppose such a program for fear that an increased supply of teachers would weaken its case for salary increases.[24] Nonetheless, the legislature should adopt such a plan, so that the Commonwealth's most talented citizens may contribute immediately to the creation of the new entrepreneurial schools.

Staffing

Rules that limit the authority and autonomy of the principal as chief executive of the schools must be eliminated. A public school principal must enjoy the same freedom to forge a distinctive culture as the headmaster of a private school. This entails, most importantly, freeing him to build his own team of professionally like-minded, high-quality staff. Tenure, seniority, and other collective bargaining constraints prevent enterprising principals from recruiting, managing, promoting, and retaining staff members who subscribe to the school's mission and plan, and terminating those who do not. One headmaster described what he, and others, must do to build a high-quality staff:

> Given the lack of an accountability system, you have to push, prod, plead, beg, and prey on the best intentions of the people who are already in your building. In some cases, very rarely, you are able to evaluate people out and bring in somebody who is good. In some cases, I've had to make life miserable for people so that they elect to transfer out of the building and then hopefully get someone a little better.[25]

Currently, principals must work within the constraints of the Boston Teachers Union contract, which contains 221 single-spaced pages of rules governing staffing. There are 16 such collective bargaining agreements for different categories of personnel. Top managers confirm that even the superintendent is not free to select her own staff, so great would be the political cost of removing entrenched subordinates. One long-time Court Street manager has created a notorious bureaucratic empire that thwarts schools' initiatives. He has successfully eluded the efforts of several superintendents to dislodge him.

Writing the Job Description

As any private-sector manager knows, the first step in staffing an organization is to write a recruitment specification, including a job description. While the job might resemble a position in another organization, the manager must explain what makes this job unique and identify the key skills and traits he seeks in applicants. The more generic the job description, the less likely the recruitment search will succeed. For a teacher, for example, the job specification should address such questions as these:

> What are the school's mission, culture, and special ways? What are the unique requirements of the teaching position? Will the teacher be expected to work in a team with other cluster teachers? Will she be responsible for mainstreamed special education students? With what kinds of special needs? Will she be charged with managing and evaluating classroom aides? Will her relationship with junior teachers and special education staff in the classroom be democratic or hierarchical? Are there unusual requirements, such as taking the children on trips or Outward Bound programs? Are there special credentials or professional experiences that would be valuable? Is computer experience useful? Would someone who has been trained in Reading Recovery be able to come up to speed much faster in the school's instructional model?

> Should the candidate be willing to work extra hours and weekends planning the new school with her colleagues? What kinds of traits and qualities of mind is the existing school team looking for? Are there specific personality traits that would best fit with those of other team members?

When private companies recruit, they ponder such questions. If a search firm is hired, the recruiter probes each detail with the prospective manager, several drafts of the recruitment specifications are passed back and forth, and fictional "ideal candidates" are described. The process benefits manager and employee alike. The employer makes his expectations clear and ensures that the strongest candidates are considered. The prospective employee has the opportunity to assess whether the job expectations, culture, and compensation are all attractive.

But in Boston, principals are prohibited from writing a job description: One math teacher position is identical to any other. Any attempt to particularize the job is grieved by the union. Only in a few instances has the union consented, such as for certain teaching positions at the substantially separate McKinley School.[26]

As chapter 3 detailed, like-minded staff members who believe in each other and in the school's goals are an essential element of subscription. Many of the new schools will have highly particular curricula and pedagogies. A specific interest or skill—such as artistic and theatrical talent, at-risk teaching experience, training in educational technology and multimedia, or curriculum development expertise—will be essential to one job but irrelevant to another. If the district is to launch new and effective schools, it must allow the executive directors to write both job descriptions and search specifications.

Setting Compensation Levels

Currently, principals have no authority over compensation levels. Salaries are set by collective bargaining agreements and are strictly a function of the number of years spent teaching and the highest degree earned. All teachers, whether of kindergarten, high school physics, or special education, are paid according to the same scale.

As chapter 7 argued, principals must have the authority to set salary levels appropriate to the job description and the market of applicants.

Does the position impose unusual demands, like weekend recreation classes or an extended year? If so, it should probably pay more. Does it require someone with a rare skill, like training in Reading Recovery, a law degree, or professional music training? Such teachers may be in demand and thus more expensive. No one is penalized by this process; the school team needs the candidate and will spend more to attract her. If, however, the school hires a new teacher to do essentially the same job as another but for more money, other teachers are sure to protest. The school's morale would then be undermined and management would risk the loss of key staff members to other schools—a cost the executive director would think twice before incurring.

Principals must also have the authority to design and administer attractive benefits packages. Schools could pool their benefits purchases to maintain economies of scale, and local oversight would reduce the cost of fraudulent claims. Several principals told of widespread workers' compensation abuse:

> The personnel department does not investigate claims thoroughly. There are certain doctors that everybody goes to; when I see their names, I just say oh, right. People decide they want to be out for the year and collect some salary. Unfortunately, when they're out collecting full salary, they are draining the school department their 40-plus thousand dollars without doing anything and they're out working second jobs.[27]

The central office's response to this apparently widespread problem might be, quite naturally, to devise new rules and procedures to prevent abuses; for example, a physician employed by the district might be required to validate each claim. In the entrepreneurial school, the executive director would be familiar with each staff member; false claims would be apparent and new and costly administrative oversight unnecessary.

Interviewing and Hiring

Until recently, the school's principal had *no* say in who filled a position: She automatically got the most senior teacher in the district's pool. Now the principal can choose, but only among the pool's three most senior teachers; the principal may not recruit or even interview from outside the district, even if she has identified a suitable candidate. Imagine if a private-sector manager were expected to compete in her industry while obliged to choose between the first three applicants for each opening! This union-mandated requirement has obviously had a disastrous effect on staff quality, making it nearly impossible for schools to build compatible, like-minded teams.

Many teachers would welcome the freedom to apply for a job at a particular school. One teacher described her ideal workplace: "It would be a building where both the kids and the faculty *wanted* to be there. They would know the school's purpose—*why* they are there. Together they would learn and work and accomplish—academically, socially, and spiritually."[28] Another teacher mused, "It would be nice to be able to look around and find a school that I think runs well and say, 'I would like to go there, to school A'—and then go to school A without having to go through all the red tape. I know that would be something a lot of people would like."[29] The quality of teaching suffers under the current assignment policy, she explained. "There are a lot of teachers who aren't happy in the school that they teach in. That doesn't present itself as the ideal situation. You have to be happy in the school, in the job that you are in, or you don't do the job well."[30] In turn, she would like to be able to choose the specialists that come into her classroom for science, language, and art.

Many Boston principals expressed the depth of their frustration with the current constraints and emphasized the need to recruit freely:

> A big constraint for me is not having the ability to work through contracts. The teachers in this building are wonderful teachers. And I believe in unionism also, but the way it is operated here in the BPS has really been to the detriment of the children. We can't choose our own staff, for example. We're pretty much tied down to what we have."[31]

But some strong principals chafe less at these constraints, and pride themselves on the elaborate schemes they use to work around them. Some hire substitutes. One principal uses private grants to pay the salaries of chosen teachers. Others have learned how to anticipate precisely the assignment, by seniority, of teachers districtwide, so that they can grab the teacher they want when the moment comes. All these schemes rely, of course, on principals exploiting political connections at Court Street. As Kim Marshall explained,

> Three years ago, when I first came here, there was a teacher who was working as a sub for about two months for a teacher out on a medical crisis. We spotted her as a very, very strong person and I kept in touch with her. . . . Last summer, we developed a vacancy through retirement and by hook and by crook, by great good luck, and pressure, and knowing people, I was able to get her in over the heads of several other teachers. It's not like recruiting someone in Brookline. This person had to be in the system, she had to be in the pipeline, she had to have all these things right. So it's not an open process at all. And the same is true of principalships.[32]

Understandably, some of the most determined principals resort to cheating to get around the union's rules. One award-winning teacher explained how a celebrated principal recruited her:

> She was recruiting teachers who were unhappy where they were to come to the _____ School to work for her. So here I am on a boat one night, with the mayor—a party for her. And I get to meet her! I said to her, "I hear you're getting a lot of good teachers. I'm jealous!" Because what I really wanted was a classroom. And the reality is that if you're white and female in Boston, you are *not* going to get a job as a classroom teacher. And she looked at me and she said, "What do you mean, you're jealous? Do you want to come? Do you want a classroom?" I said, "Yeah, but I'm an elementary teacher." She said, "That's all right. Kids are kids, you know." Well, she can talk anyone into anything. She's a visionary. She drives a lot of people crazy. I love her dearly. Besides, we *do* share a vision about the way things ought to be done. And she said she could get me a job. I said, "Look, first of all, I'm an elementary teacher. Second of all, I'm white." She said, "Are you bilingual?" I said, "Well, I speak Italian." It didn't really count, but that's what she did. She said [to the district] that I was "bi-lingual." I mean, she knows how to play the games. She got me a job.[33]

In a nod to the equity ethos, other principals insist that their responsibility is to work with whatever teachers they are assigned. To them, the test of leadership is to make ordinary teachers perform extraordinarily. But the district is charged with running an educational system, not an employment system. Reflecting this confusion of purpose, principals conflate their true responsibility of equity to their *clients*—the right of all their students to an education—and a false sense of obligation to every *employee.* As one principal said,

> I think of kids and parents as consumers. If school departments have the obligation to provide the best possible services to their consumers I think that kids and parents in this system . . . might have an incredible legal case for the many things that don't allow me to go about getting the very best staff possible. By tying my hands, they don't allow me to provide the students with the best education. I *know* that I could get better teachers. I think that is the real issue with the system.[34]

Complying with Court-Ordered Racial Quotas

Rigid affirmative action goals impose another constraint. Court-ordered quotas are policed by the Department of Equity. Several principals, themselves people of color, cited instances when they were not allowed to hire a non-minority teacher highly regarded by the school's faculty, even though their schools well exceeded the district's requirements for minority faculty. Districtwide quotas prohibited it. Manuel Monteiro, the director of personnel from 1984 to October 1991, explained how, pursuant to court mandates and to avoid further judicial intervention, minority staffing levels are managed by increments of one-quarter of a percentage point.[35]

If Boston truly wants the very best teachers, the courts and the district should free the new schools to hire those with the best qualifications and the highest test scores—whatever their race or ethnicity. In the classroom, the academic skill of the teacher is what counts. In several studies, after controlling for the student's family background, it was the quality of the teaching staff—as measured by teacher vocabulary and language skills tests—that correlated with high student achievement.[36] Most schools will aggressively recruit a diverse faculty. Some may attach special importance to, for instance, the sensitivity that a black teacher can bring to a largely black classroom. District quotas should not interfere with their choices.

Dodging the Incompetents

Because teachers are rarely if ever fired in Boston, a pool has formed of teachers who are not merely second-rate, but egregiously incompetent. Estimates of the pool's size vary: Monteiro pegs the number of "turkey" teachers at 30, while other personnel interviewed place it at closer to 100.[37] So patently incompetent or uncaring are these teachers that there is a high degree of consensus on the list's membership, according to Monteiro. Always mindful of equity, each summer the personnel department doles out these teachers, rotating them through the system with bureaucratic precision. No one principal need endure each teacher for longer than his due.[38] According to Monteiro,

> I have to tell that school, "You've got to take this person; I have no choice." And they'll say to me, "That's a turkey!" . . . The names [on the list] are generally 80 percent repetitious. In fact, one year I even went to one of the zone superintendents and said, "Beware of this flock of turkeys." . . .
>
> These people appear in the pools every single year, and nobody wants them. . . . And, I can only say, my office gets the s - - - kicked out of us, we get the bad reputation, we get the bad rap on this, because we're delivering these people. . . . If you get a turkey through this process, don't blame me. We know who these people are, and I attempt to spread them out. We won't put them all in the same school—it's unfair. They know who the turkeys are [but] they have no choice.[39]

While staffing is largely controlled by complex rules embedded in collective bargaining agreements, the personnel director tries to minimize the damage done to any one school:

> I've got to put these people in. I will look around at what has happened to each school through our other processes—who they lost, who they gained, and I'll say okay, you get the best and you get the worst. . . . So we've got to play God.[40]

Tragically, some 2,000 to 2,500 Boston children will be condemned to these teachers' classrooms each year. As one principal said,

> There are teachers whom I feel—I'm not just talking about this school; I've worked in four schools—should have other places in the school system. Not necessarily that they don't have a function in education, but perhaps the classroom is not the best place. Trying to achieve that is very difficult. There are times when the union is more protective of the membership than it is concerned about the young children who are going through these classrooms—*they've* only got *one* shot.[41]

Should the future of our children be compromised by these teachers? Should the efforts of other teachers, the great majority of whom are hard working, be so undermined? Should younger teachers lose their jobs to keep the "turkeys" in the classroom?

Maintaining Staff Stability

The union contract requires that layoffs be based strictly on seniority, so budget cuts hack away indiscriminately at good and bad teachers. Quality is expressly not a consideration. Senior teachers affected by layoffs are entitled by union rules to jockey for the most desirable remaining jobs and "bump" more junior teachers in the district. The domino-like process spreads through the schools and annually wreaks havoc on principals' fragile teams. When the dust settles, many of the best teachers have lost their jobs. As principal Robert Martin explained,

> In all my years as a principal, I have never begun and ended the school year, and never gone from one year to the next, with the same faculty. It's always someone in, someone out. And always because of circumstances beyond my control. And that's infuriating. When you're told you have to cut particular positions, so often the position is held by energetic provisional teachers who are lost because of low seniority. These teachers are not long out of school and have the energy to work twice as hard, partly because they're new—they want to learn, are enthusiastic—and because they want to impress me. They want to let me know they've got all the right stuff.[42]

Just when teaching teams have been assembled with great effort, bumping disrupts them. Larry Myatt of the entrepreneurial Fenway School described what happens:

> If we want a certain social studies teacher who is very broad, who is willing to do camping trips, who's willing to be flexible . . . we won't get that individ-

> ual. When layoffs happen, we lose a good teacher because he's not senior. This teacher, who clearly identifies with the program and buys into our goals, will be reassigned elsewhere, and someone else who has *nothing* in common with our education ideas will be assigned.[43]

School executives themselves fall victim to the same bumping process. One principal explained his predicament:

> I have the least amount of seniority as a headmaster—I've been a headmaster the fewest years and I'm the youngest. If they cut one headmaster's position they wouldn't cut somebody who is not doing a good job, they would cut the *youngest* headmaster. So I would theoretically lose my job. It doesn't necessarily make sense. Who is not doing his job? Let's get rid of *that* person first.[44]

Consistent with their full budgetary authority, the executive directors of the new schools must have complete responsibility for determining layoffs, without regard to seniority, when required by declining enrollments or budget cuts.

Negotiating Workplace Rules

Anyone who undertakes change in the Boston schools today is quickly overpowered, ensnared by the 16 collective bargaining agreements in a web of rules so dense that movement is virtually impossible. Perched high in the union office, alerted by a hundred union representatives of the slightest provocation, the union stands ready to sting the innovator with a volley of grievances. A charged-up principal wants to come in to work on a weekend morning; the custodial union tells her she must hire a union custodian on overtime for a four-hour minimum (cost: $100) to open the door to her own school. A principal wants to create a multidisciplinary teaching position; the teachers' union prohibits it because it violates assignment by content area. A teacher wants to brainstorm with her colleagues after school; she is reported to the union by her peers for violating working hour rules. These and many other incidents were described by staff members at all levels.

The teachers' union demeans its own membership by insisting that everything about the workplace be prescribed, from the length of lunch breaks, to the length and schedule of the work day, to the maximum number of minutes per week that teachers are permitted to meet with one another. One principal explained how the Boston teachers' contract has become more constraining:

> The contract has changed the way teachers operate. Every school has building [union] reps. For instance, if I schedule a meeting after school—which teachers don't have to attend because it's voluntary—and maybe four or five teachers stay after school to talk about things, someone from the union might say to those teachers, "We don't like the fact that you are staying after school with the administrators." They will tell them that "by staying after school you are letting administration off without paying you."
>
> We have people who file grievances saying that I shouldn't require teachers to call parents after school hours. But your job is not just between 7:20 and 1:50 and that's the end of it—you can't be an effective teacher that way.[45]

One principal said,

> Does the union aid education? No. They really don't. What has happened in Boston is the union has negotiated such an outrageously accommodating contract to the teachers that it has made this a fire-proof system. I don't blame the union, because the union only negotiates a contract as permissive as the school department lets it. You know, superintendents who are on their way out, superintendents who are angry with the school committee like the last one, who negotiated a contract that makes it very difficult to administer discipline. It makes it very, very difficult for a teacher to be held accountable when contracts include language about whether a principal can ask a teacher to write a lesson plan. That's nit-picking.[46]

The schools with the principals least willing to take on the union, become what this principal calls the "big union schools," refuges for the least effective teachers most preoccupied with contractual minutiae and dependent on its protections.

Boston's teachers should be treated like professionals, not factory workers. A teacher should do what is necessary to get her job done and be judged on the results. Entrepreneurship is virtually impossible in the current environment. Collaboration, trust, and voluntary employment should replace district rules; principals and teachers should together determine the framework in which they realize common goals. As in the private sector, many schools will choose to draw up a brief "staff handbook" describing benefits and policies of which all new employees will be apprised. The best teachers will welcome the accountability that comes with more school autonomy. One veteran principal reflected,

> When a teacher doesn't see taking responsibility as his role, then that teacher uses the union like a carman's union, rather than as a professional union. They start looking at the number of minutes for non-teaching periods, the number of minutes for cafeteria—those kinds of nit-picks. My experience has been that the best teachers are those who are the least preoccupied with the union. Those that are preoccupied are those people who are mediocre and who feel a need to run to the union at any moment to get protection if the principal finally comes through the door and says, "Look, what you're doing is not enough."[47]

Evaluating Performance

A well-constructed evaluation system, including self-evaluation and frequent feedback, is essential to effective personnel management. Evaluation is usually guided by an evaluation instrument, a document by which both manager and employee consider the employee's performance, measured by progress in attaining goals jointly established at the previous year's evaluation. Often the employee is asked to critique the supervisor's performance and to comment on how he could be a more effective manager.

In Boston, interviews with principals and teachers found widespread dissatisfaction with the crude, two-page evaluation instrument.[48] The instrument has no component of self-evaluation, no provision for establishing written annual performance objectives or goals for personal and professional development. For each of only eight performance components, including attendance and punctuality, the union contract requires the principal to choose between only three possible ratings: unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and excellent.

The mechanical and unreflective nature of the instrument is consistent with the conception of the teacher as an interchangeable worker whose performance can be tallied up with a few "satisfactory" and "unsatisfactory" ratings. The private-sector professional would be insulted to receive such a trivial and impersonal evaluation. But in the antagonistic culture of unionized education, the instrument is perceived not as a tool for bettering performance but as a loaded legal document, the first step in the process of grievance and arbitration.

Principals do not take seriously their responsibility to assess teachers and often fail to file negative evaluations of poor performers. Principals are so unwilling to take on the union that the problem employee is generally "shuffled around" (Monteiro's term) to the next school. As a result one principal inherits the problem teacher another was unwilling to weed out:

> One of the reasons I had such a major problem with a teacher was that under the previous principal she had gotten "excellent" evaluations. And I said to the principal, "How could she possibly have? Because you can't tell me that something new suddenly surfaces under a new principal." He said, "Oh, yeah, she always did get excellents." And I said, "*Why?*" And he said, "Because I couldn't deal with the union."[49]

Sensing the system's indifference to quality, even highly motivated teachers quickly turn cynical:

> Being known as a good teacher in the Boston Public Schools doesn't mean a lot to me because what is "good" in Boston? I've seen people who are atrocious who still get good evaluations because they're part of the old boy network or nobody wants to give them an unsatisfactory. And I've seen fabulous teachers who continue to do fabulous work that nobody sees.[50]

An executive director should be free to design the performance instrument that fits her own school culture. Some schools will elect to establish informal but frequent evaluations, while others will prefer a structured instrument with detailed ratings.

It is well established that a manager can effectively supervise and evaluate only a small number of direct reports—perhaps five, certainly no more than ten. There is not enough time, when supervising a large group of employees, to stay abreast of their work, provide regular counsel, and conduct in-depth evaluations. One principal cannot, therefore, meaningfully evaluate the work of a school's staff of some 50 administrators, teachers, aides, and custodians. This flat organizational structure would be considered patently dysfunctional in the private sector; employees would refuse to accept it. It would be akin to everyone reporting to the president of a company. Recognizing this, the new schools will create smaller units within the school, managed by someone familiar with their work, such as a more experienced teacher. The union's current archaic provisions—that a teacher can be managed and evaluated only by an administrator and not by another teacher, and that an administrator cannot teach more than two periods a day—are both relics of the factory model of misguided solidarity and enforced antagonism.[51]

Promoting and Rewarding Staff

The salary grids of Boston's collective bargaining agreements prohibit principals from amending job descriptions, assigning new responsibilities, promoting star performers, or awarding discretionary pay. Organizational flexibility is nonexistent. As principal Robert Martin said,

> In the past [prior to the new school committee], in Boston, with the politics being what they were, there was not always a correlation between promotion and competence. There *was* a frightful correlation between promotion and politics.[52]

Teachers should be paid according to the marketplace: good ones more than bad, those with skills in short supply more than those whose abilities are common, those who take on work in dangerous settings or assume extra responsibilities—like managing others, working the full year, or developing curricula—more than those who do the strict minimum.[53]

Good management also entails a discretionary component of compensation, rewards and bonuses bestowed on the basis of performance. One headmaster is willing to be held to compensation guidelines, "but I want to have the flexibility to go above and beyond those standards in selected cases and to have the freedom to work my budget to do so. I believe in the right to say, 'You're an exceptional teacher and you're going to get a bonus this year.'" Because morale will suffer if such authority is exercised unfairly, private organizations think twice before issuing cash bonuses or granting compensatory time. If another employee is thought to have made a similar contribution in the past without financial acknowledgement, the award will seem capricious and unfair. But the risk of poor management is no justification for depriving good managers of an important tool. As one teacher said,

> In any field, you have to be rewarded for a job well done. I think teaching is the same way. There are many people out there who give over and above 100 percent—and they don't get s - - - for it.[54]

Developing Staff

Nearly everyone emphasized the inadequacy of current programs for in-service staff development. According to principal Steven Leonard, the district's staff development academy has the capacity to enroll each teacher in its four-week program only once every 40 years.[55] Charlotte Harris, director of external funds, estimates the district spent about $35 per teacher in 1990–91 for staff development, in comparison to the $1,000 to $2,000 a typical large corporation would spend. This is barely enough to subscribe to a professional journal.[56] Yet millions more of district funds for staff development are embedded, she notes, in the "step and lane" salary table for teachers. Teachers can increase their salaries only by obtaining course credits and higher degrees, usually from schools of education. In this way, the teachers' contract creates a powerful incentive to obtain credits for courses that may be of little value in improving the teacher's or the school's performance.

The funds budgeted are often spent on workshops and one-time interventions, which many teachers feel are of limited value:

> Sometimes I think a sounding board—a group of teachers getting together to air out problems—would even be better than paying so many dollars for an "expert" to come in. Some of the experts are very good, but it's only a one-shot deal. They get you fired up, but how are you going to implement it in your classroom? How are you going to bring it back? I've been to workshops where they *say* that they are going to give you something you can really bring back to your classroom. Yeah, sure, give me the whole program and the $800 to buy it.[57]

Many principals, as well, seek control of their own opportunities for development:

> Whenever we try and provide professional development, somebody at Court Street decides, "This is what the principals need." They don't come to us and ask, "What would you like to become a better principal and maybe one day become a superintendent?" Nobody asks me that. They say, "We have a workshop on this and you must attend." You are told what to do.[58]

In any field, professionals need to be apprised of the developments in their field, to exchange ideas with their peers, and to collaborate with others outside their institution on solutions to common problems. Teachers are no exception. One headmaster emphasized that staff development is an essential part in a system of accountability:

> I want to have money available so I can have an accountability system: "You are not up to snuff and you need to do this. I'll pay for it the first time and if you don't get your act together, then goodbye."
>
> That kind of money is necessary because it rejuvenates people. It keeps you invested in what you do. If you want to take a course in medieval literature and you are doing a great job, then I want to invest in you. . . . The private sector invests an incredible amount of money to do just that.[59]

With complete control over their budget, as outlined in chapter 7, the faculty and administration of the entrepreneurial schools will likely choose to invest in staff development.

Tenure and Terminating Staff

If the majority of Boston's teachers are capable and hard-working, our energies should be directed to creating the conditions for their success—not to ridding the system of a small minority of ineffective staff. But any employee knows how just one person, unable or unwilling to do the job, can undermine the rest of an organization's team—and how imperative is management's prompt reaction.

In Boston, after three years, a new (provisional) teacher is automatically tenured, unless the teacher's performance is rated unsatisfactory—something that rarely occurs. It is practically impossible to terminate a permanent teacher because the state's tenure law and the district's collective bargaining agreements have made the process so onerous and costly that few principals undertake it.

When an employee's performance is poor, any good manager will first attempt to understand the cause—exceptional circumstances in the employee's home life, an irremediable conflict with a colleague, or simply a poor fit of skills to the job. The manager (here, the school's administrator) has the responsibility to make every reasonable effort to respond to the problem, whether it be arranging for coaching and feedback, suggesting better instructional practices, or even altering the job description.

But sadly, sometimes these ameliorative efforts fail. Some staff members will simply prove unfit, whether because of incompetence, lack of motivation, or simply a poor match with the organization. Some may be unsuited to the profession. Others might thrive in a different organization. As one teacher said,

> I think it's important to help people. I think that my school does offer that opportunity—does give direction to people if they need it. They'll throw me out of the union, but I think that there are people teaching or in guidance positions who shouldn't be doing what they're doing. I think that when people see that, it should be addressed.[60]

Sometimes such an employee can be persuaded to leave voluntarily, but not always. Other options exhausted, the manager must have the authority to terminate. If he doesn't, the quality of the organization and its product will suffer, and just as important, other staff members will resent management's irresponsibility in not maintaining staff quality.

Teachers' unions claim that teachers *can* be terminated, but that principals simply do not do their jobs. The law allows dismissal for "inefficiency, incompetency, incapacity, conduct unbecoming a teacher . . . insubordination, or other good cause."[61] But the due process requirements are so onerous that a single termination can consume half the principal's time for two years. As one headmaster said, "You pretty much have to do something that is unconscionable to be fired in order to be held accountable for anything in this system. I think that is awful."[62] Principal Robert Martin concurred,

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> The people that you do see getting fired—which is very, very rare—are people who are doing something that is illegal. There is no real precedent for being fired for being a bad teacher. If you're a thief or AWOL, then you get fired—eventually. But otherwise you will probably just be transferred to someplace else [in the district].[63]

Another principal's ordeal was typical of what many recounted under the assurance of anonymity:

> We had a very difficult situation. We had a teacher here who was doing some terrible things to the children. And I saw it. I wrote about it [to officials]. Parents saw it and heard about it from the children. And *they* wrote about it. . . . It was a very difficult year to go through. I ordered this teacher counseling services that were available through BPS; I brought her to the services. I sent her to the professional development institute that we have in Boston. I assumed the expense for a substitute teacher for the four weeks that she was there. I did *everything* that I could do to remediate, to help within her classroom. But she's 62 years old, she's in a kindergarten position, and she just doesn't have patience with children. There have been numerous incidents throughout the year, and I have not been able to do anything about this woman. Every time that I've done something, like written her up, the union came in full force, defending her to the hilt. And she has the [teachers'] contract, and she has the need for a job, and people's jobs should not just be arbitrarily taken away from them. But on the other hand, I think the union needs to develop some kind of a self-policing system to deal with people who are incompetent.[64]

Over a 10-year period, not one permanent teacher (there are now some 4,300) was dismissed for performance reasons.[65] According to the former director of personnel,

> We may have gone 10 years where the only permanent teachers dismissed were those who were child molesters. We had three or four of them convicted in court. . . . They weren't performance-based dismissals.[66]

An aggressive superintendent can have some effect; while Robert Spillane was superintendent (1981–85), as many as 10 teachers a year were asked to resign or were terminated.

Tenure has no place in an education system run for the benefit of students. The private-sector employee knows that his firm has to stay fit to survive: Excessive protections would impair staff quality and undermine the firm's competitiveness. The existing laws, the potential reactions of his colleagues, and the morale of his firm all prevent him from being fired capriciously. Why then should we tolerate such constraints on this most vital function in our society, education?

Boston's strong principals must improvise measures to rid their schools of incompetent teachers. The most commonly cited strategy is to make staying in the school as unpleasant as possible until the teacher chooses to leave. This solution, however, is slow and uncertain, poisonous to the school environment, and unfair to the teacher's pupils, who must also endure the process. Worse, the teacher usually ends up in another Boston school. Several principals told of eliminating a program or a teaching position just to weed out one harmful teacher; clearly, this tactic penalizes both the children who are deprived of the program and the children in the school to which the teacher is reassigned. In still other cases, the principal gives the teacher some lesser job, where he can do less damage. As one principal explained,

> It takes a tremendous amount of time to work with an unsatisfactory person, and that takes time away from instructional leadership, being in the classroom, and working with the children. . . . My first year at the school, I had an unsatisfactory person who worked two days a week in my building and three days in another. So I had to cooperate with the other principals in terms of the evaluations [required for due process]. I said to the other principal at the end of the year, "We must have spent 60 hours with her." She said it was more like 100. And in the end, we lost the kids. . . . I resent that. . . . Colleagues say to me all the time, "Oh, I give you a lot of credit to take that on." The way they deal with it is to sort of ignore it. They isolate, they put few children in the classroom. It doesn't solve the problem.[67]

Principals and headmasters are also at fault in not attending to staff quality. Formerly tenured teachers themselves, they enjoy similar protections and have little incentive to clean house. Monteiro estimated that only some 20 percent of the district's principals are "truly excellent."[68] While there is a high degree of district consensus on which principals are strong, mediocre, and very poor, the director could not recall the last time a principal was dismissed. "Usually they are just shuffled around."[69]

Tenure laws were once necessary to protect against religious, racial, and sexual discrimination: Once a young teacher could be fired when she married or became pregnant. But today, civil rights laws afford all workers basic anti-discrimination protections. Tenure must be eliminated, but not merely in name. If new—and, if possible, still more burdensome—due process provisions substitute for the existing protections, nothing shall have been gained.

The Indignity of False Security

While some teachers spoke highly of the Boston Teachers Union and the protections the union affords, the job security now provided by collective bargaining is inequitable and extracts a heavy price on some of the city's best teachers. It is also in many ways illusory. There is reason to believe that seniority, tenure, collective bargaining, and other features of the unionized employment system deter a class of more enterprising people from taking on the challenges of teaching in the inner city. In the past, with the doors closed to other professions, women were drawn to teaching and the profession was held in high esteem. Today, good salaries, rich benefits, and even the satisfaction of teaching children may not compensate for the bureaucratic culture that offers few opportunities for initiative, no rewards for exceptional performance, and little respect from society. The union's watchword of equity may, to these teachers, seem anything but. When nearly every other career offers professionals a chance to compete for rewards and recognition, why choose the one where it makes not a whit of difference whether you do a good job or a bad one?

If the answer is security, even that can be small comfort. In Boston, staffing is controlled largely by Court Street and a teacher is just a name in a "step" and "lane" of the salary table. Provisional and tenured teachers must suffer the same indignities:

> I taught ESL [English as a Second Language] for 13 years at the elementary level and then I got laid off. Then I went to middle school. They abolished the position over the summer, without telling me. They reassigned me to do P&D [planning and development] at the elementary level. I got upset and refused

> and said I shouldn't have been reassigned like that. I fought my way into Personnel. Two days after school started, I got another position, again at the elementary level. The school closed after two years and I had to go into a pool. That is when I chose to go back to middle school and now I teach reading.[70]

The annual battle with City Hall over the school budget is seldom resolved by April 15, the statutory deadline for notifying teachers of layoffs. Uncertain how many teachers it will employ, the district sends pink slips to some 300 teachers. In September, with the budget determined, some 250 are rehired. But the notification comes late. Many teachers cannot afford the risk of not having a job and accept positions in other districts. Meanwhile, the city wastes some $300,000 each year in unemployment compensation.[71] The Massachusetts Teachers Association won the right for teachers to collect over the summer unless assured continuing employment. Similarly, new teachers considering working for the district are unwilling to forego other opportunities to await Boston's late decision; in this way, the district annually loses out on some of the best young teachers.

City Hall and the district are both responsible for the failure to reach a prompt agreement. The district submits its budget on time, and the city should respect deadlines. But each year Court Street demands still greater per-student spending, and when City Hall balks, spends at such a rate anyway. When an agreement is finally reached, the school year is half over, and the necessary cuts far more devastating than if the district had adopted a responsible spending plan from the start.

In a system of entrepreneurial schools, each school would know by the spring roughly how many students would be enrolled the following year. Given the reasonable assumption that the total district appropriation would be maintained, schools would know their approximate budgets. Schools could initiate any staff increases or decreases before the summer, providing teachers adequate time to apply for jobs at other Boston schools or outside the district.

Solidarity

At a sprightly 87, the fight is still in Martha O'Neil. In 1945, she and two other Boston teachers founded the Boston Teachers Union. Today, she recounts vividly the routine exploitation that fired the union's successful struggle for justice. Back then, marriage was a basis for dismissal, men were paid more than women for the same work, and pregnant women could not teach.[72] Her voice still defiant, O'Neil explains how Boston became the first district in the state to guarantee equal pay for women, and how the union successfully fought for the right to appeal grievances to the Superior Court: "It was ridiculous! The administration was the district attorney, the judge, *and* the jury." She recalls being asked how teachers could continue working when pregnant, "I told them, 'They'll have their babies in the schools! We'll put clinics in every school!'" Still mocking the administration, she remembers how "women would wear a smock all year and principals didn't even know they were pregnant."

Any organization's solidarity is sustained through shared memories, like O'Neil's proud tale of victory, passed from one generation to the next. Much to its credit, the Boston Teachers Union maintains that solidarity. But at the same time, it now faces a dilemma. The old way is patently *not* working, despite teachers' hard work and dedication. The union representative out of earshot, teachers profess to each other a new awareness: that unions and collective bargaining perpetuate much of what is wrong with their jobs—the notion, long obsolete, of an "education factory," with its debilitating culture of institutionalized antagonism and mistrust. It is a heavy price to pay for a little security.

The talk of vouchers grows louder, and the threat of extinction for the public schools seems ever more real. The struggles Martha O'Neil waged nearly a half-century ago are long over. The protections she fought for are now rights to which all workers are entitled. Management is no longer the enemy. Yet in the schools this historical antagonism has become entrenched. Due process is the ordinary course of business, and union solidarity has become pathological. Paralyzed by a culture of its own making, the district has ceded to the courts and the state the job of running the city's schools.

Over these 50 years, families, corporations, all our institutions have been transformed. But our public schools remain frozen in the past. As one Boston teacher said, "Our schools have to change. The schools that exist today were conceived in the 1800s, the industrial revolution. They were designed for the masses—a factory model of education. 'Get them out able to run a machine.' Times are changing. We're in an information age. . . . We're 100 years behind the times."[73]

The time has come to bury the hatchet, let go of the old anger, and transform the schools. To do so will require all the vision and passion of a Martha O'Neil. Boston, the birthplace of the public schools, can by the start of the next century lead the nation in public education. All the talent of Boston's staff must be tapped in a wave of entrepreneurial activity. It is time to toss out the rule books, the 100-page contracts, the old assumptions. In its vital new role as an association of educators, the union must point the way by celebrating, not suppressing, teacher initiative, encouraging professionalism, and welcoming the diversity that will be the trademark of the new city schools. Parents will be able to trust the schools to give their children a good education, taxpayers will be confident that their money is well spent, and teaching will be respected as one of society's most important professions.

3.7

AFTERWORD

EACH INTERVIEW echoed the last: Boston's schools are staffed by committed teachers and principals whose efforts are daily undercut by a dysfunctional organization. Some are angry—they realize it need not be this way. But many staff members have devoted their professional lives to teaching or administration; indeed, many have worked only in the Boston schools. They believe this is the way it must be. Some teachers stoically accept the indignities of their world—the infantilization of their profession, the lack of control over their craft—reassuring themselves and each other that they are helping the children. Others point a finger in blame: at the district administration, at uncaring parents, at city officials, at the unions. Still others labor to perpetuate the most destructive features of the system.

The staff of the Boston public schools work in a cage, but may know not its shape or who built it. In truth, many have had a hand: the legislature, the unions, the courts, even district administrators. To run the schools, Court Street must assign students to schools and classes, hire teachers, and purchase supplies and services. But federal court orders decree how students will be assigned—according to a long-obsolete notion of racial balance. The state dictates that the district hire only from a certain certified pool, the courts that each candidate meet their test not of ability but of race, and the unions that one teacher not dislodge another teacher, no matter how ineffective. Class size mandates, collective bargaining agreements, cumbersome purchasing laws, and district rules all govern how a school's resources will be expended.

The authority of educators must be reestablished by stripping away the constraints that now undermine the schools. In their place, a minimal set of ground rules can be laid down. Then the superintendent can call out to enterprising educators to step forward with plans for new schools. Let parents and staff choose freely among them, in accordance with their educational convictions. School by school, Boston's educational system will be transformed. In a few short years, Boston could rise up from among the worst urban districts to one of the very best.

Most education reform programs fail to replicate the success of the pilot site. No wonder: real change takes true believers. In attempting to impose new practices systemwide, reformers neglect that each employee in an organization can, through inaction, exercise the right of veto. In the entrepreneurial plan, there are only pilot sites, and each site is driven by true believers. Change occurs only as fast as teachers, in voluntary association, seek it.

For the sake of proposing a clear direction, this book has included many specific suggestions. These can and should be debated. The next step is to invite collaboration among all groups—school committee, staff, parents, students, and policymakers—on the specifics of a new plan for radical change in the city schools. The new superintendent, Lois Harrison-Jones, and the newly appointed school committee will be instrumental in changing the schools' course.

Every school district is unique, yet most urban systems share some of Boston's characteristics. The parents and staff of Worcester, Lowell, Lawrence, Fall River, and other large urban districts may recognize aspects of their school systems in these pages. Only further study will determine the extent of these parallels, and the promise entrepreneurship holds for the revitalization of their troubled schools.

As of this writing, the governor and the legislature are collaborating on an ambitious plan for primary and secondary education reform in the Commonwealth. The plan would overhaul the state's educational finance system, and direct some $800 million in additional state monies to K–12 education over the next five years. The plan establishes a "foundation level" of spending for each district, based on the number and type of students in the community. Local property tax levies would remain the primary source of school funding, but districts that fell short of the foundation level would receive state funds sufficient to bridge the gap. Statewide educational goals and a system of "performance indicators" would be established to chart school progress. One version of the reform plan calls for under-performing schools to be declared "educationally bankrupt" and penalized by the state. The task force charged with drafting the bill is reviewing a list of additional reform elements, many drawn from recent legislation in other states.

Some of the state's poorest school districts, like Chelsea and Springfield, cannot possibly function at the current level of school spending. In these communities, the additional funds are a requirement, but not a guarantee, of better schools. But Boston's problem is not a lack of funds: In the spirit of "reform," Boston has dramatically increased its total school spending and teacher salaries over the last decade. Yet neither quality nor equity of educational opportunity improved for Boston's children—if anything, they declined. As in other states, including California, where similar financing reforms have been implemented, equalizing financial "inputs" will not equalize educational "outputs."[1]

The most likely result of the measures now being considered is that overall spending on K–12 education will increase, but inequities across districts will be only marginally reduced (wealthy districts will choose to exceed the foundation) and the improvement in educational quality so urgently needed will not be realized. The reasons are by now clear. First, the plan does not condition additional funds on fundamental district restructuring. As with previous "reforms," a massive investment will be made in the schools, but the promised product will almost certainly not be delivered. The existing culture of the public schools will ensure that business continues much as usual.

Second, the reform legislation will likely call for more intervention from outside the schools. But the tangle of existing mandates—state and federal laws, regulations, court orders, and union rules—are strangling the schools. Tinkering with the existing rules and adding a host of new ones, no matter how well intentioned (such as the proposed cap on administrative spending of 15 percent of a district's total budget), will not help.[2] Indeed, by exacerbating the focus on bureaucratic compliance, it may make things worse. If nothing else is clear from these pages, it is that good schools cannot be legislated. Setting high standards, infusing additional funds, or reducing class sizes will not, by themselves or together, do much to improve our schools.

Third, the plan is punitive in spirit. Declaring schools "bankrupt" will only make educators, already resentful, feel more beleaguered. The urgent need is to *de*regulate the schools, forge a new school culture, and unleash the potential of educators toward reinventing our schools.

NOTES

Preface

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19. Thomas Toch, *In the Name of Excellence: The Struggle to Reform the Nation's Schools, Why It's Failing, and What Should be Done* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 156–158.

20. Interview with principal, July 1991.

21. Johnson, *Teachers at Work*, 213.

22. Interview with special education teacher, August 1991.

23. Johnson, *Teachers at Work*, 342–343.

24. Boston School Committee Report, Citywide Educational Coalition (CWEC), 1–14 May 1990, 4.

25. Sidney Smith, "Boston Schools and Q-Word," Op Ed, *Boston Globe*, 21 June 1990.

26. Interview with teacher, August 1991.

27. Interview with special education teacher, August 1991.

28. Interview with principal, July 1991.

29. Myron Lieberman, *Public School Choice: Current Issues/Future Directions* (Lancaster, Pa.: Technomic Publishing, 1990), 95–113.

30. Ibid.

31. Mary Anne Raywid, "A 'Reform Plan of Disillusionment,'" *Education Week*, 1 November 1990, 24.

32. Boston Municipal Research Bureau, Inc., based on Contract between the Boston Teachers Union and the School Committee of the City of Boston.

33. *Public Employment: Employment of Major Local Governments*, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1987, 152–157. The cities are Atlanta, Boston, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Denver, Milwaukee, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Portland, St. Louis, and Seattle.

34. Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, D.C.

35. Interview with principal, July 1991.

36. Interview with program administrator, August 1991.

37. Interview with headmaster, August 1991.

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39. Ted Kolderie, "Private Practice in Public School Teaching, Book 1. The Concept, Need and Design," Public School Incentives, Minneapolis, Minn., 1986, 7–12.

40. Ibid., 25.

41. Ibid., 24.

42. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Centesimus Annus*, Address on the Hundredth Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, 1 May 1991 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1991), 78.

43. Johnson, *Teacher Unions in Schools*, 34–35.

44. Interview with program administrator, August 1991.

45. Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 150E (Section 3).

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50. Johnson, *Teachers at Work*, 203.

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53. Johnson, *Teacher Unions in Schools*, 172.

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2. Diane Ravitch, "Back to Basics: Test Scores Don't Lie," *New Republic*, 6 March 1989, 14.

3. Ibid., 18.

4. Jim Sleeper is quoted in "Trans-National America," *New York Review*, 22 November 1990, 19.

5. Abigail Thernstrom, *School Choice in Massachusetts* (Boston: Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research, 1991), 126.

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7. Thernstrom, *School Choice in Massachusetts*, 96.

8. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, West Hartford Public Schools, telephone interview, 26 March 1992.

9. *From Gatekeeper to Gateway: Transforming Testing in America*, National Commission on Testing and Public Policy, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, 1990, 23.

10. Diane Ravitch, *The Schools We Deserve: Reflections on the Educational Crisis of Our Time* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1985), 173.

11. *From Gatekeeper to Gateway*, National Commission on Testing and Public Policy, x.

12. Thernstrom, *School Choice in Massachusetts*, 111.

13. John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe, *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1990), 198.

14. "The Way Out: Test Scores Patterns and Reading in Boston Public Schools," Status Report, Massachusetts Advocacy Center, Boston, September 1988, 17.

15. Ibid., 10.

16. "Trans-National America," 21.

17. *From Gatekeeper to Gateway*, National Commission on Testing and Public Policy, 19.

18. Judah Schwartz, "The Intellectual Price of Secrecy in Math Assessment," in *The Prices of Secrecy: The Social, Intellectual and Psychological Costs of Current Assessment Practice*, ed. Judah L. Schwartz and Katherine A. Viator (Cambridge, Mass.: Educational Technology Center, 1990), 53.

19. Ravitch, *The Schools We Deserve*, 178–181.

20. *From Gatekeeper to Gateway*, National Commission on Testing and Public Policy, 14.

21. Ibid., 19.

22. Kim Marshall, principal, Mather School, interview, 11 December 1990.

23. "The Way Out," Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 13.

24. Ibid., 11.

25. Ibid., 13.

26. *Curriculum Reform: Summary Report,* Citywide Educational Coalition (CWEC), 1988, 3.

27. "The Way Out," Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 11.

28. Judith Davidson and David Koppenhaver are quoted in "The Way Out," Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 12.

29. Ibid., 11–12.

30. Chubb and Moe, *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools,* 198.

31. "Trans-National America," 21.

32. "The Way Out," Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 10.

33. Interview with principal, August 1991.

34. Interview with headmaster, August 1991.

35. Susan Moore Johnson, *Teachers at Work: Achieving Success in Our Schools* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 140.

36. Judah Schwartz, "A Role for Technology in Changing Assessment: From Bias, Mediocrity, and Intimidation to Fairness, Challenge, and Support," in *The Prices of Secrecy,* ed. Schwartz and Viator, 114.

37. Ibid., 109–117.

38. Judah Schwartz, "The Intellectual Price of Secrecy," 53.

39. Ibid., 54–55.

40. Schwartz, "A Role for Technology in Changing Assessment," 115.

41. Schwartz, "The Intellectual Price of Secrecy," 54.

42. Carol S. Chomsky, "Language and Language Arts Assessment," in *The Prices of Secrecy,* ed. Schwartz and Viator, 70.

43. Interview with headmaster, August 1991.

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1. *Boston Globe,* 15 December 1991.

2. Kimberly B. Baker, "Mayor Releases Teachers' Checks," *Boston Globe,* 4 January 1992.

3. *Boston Facts & Figures, 1992 Edition,* Boston Municipal Research Bureau Inc., Boston, 1992.

4. School-Based Management Instructions and Forms for FY93 Budget Process, Budget Office, Boston Public Schools.

5. Interview with principal, July 1991.

6. Staff member, Cathedral High School, telephone interview, 7 January 1991.

7. *Results 2000: Progress in Meeting Urban Education Goals,* Council of Great City Schools, Washington, D.C., 1990.

8. *The Boston Public Schools: An Assessment of Governance, Operations, and Finance,* Northeastern University, Boston, 1991, F-6.

9. Chapter 766, Regulations 502.2(b), 502.4(b), and 502.12(a).

10. A typical middle school might have 535 students. The pro-rated expense of total BPS expense (excluding external funds) is $3,460,549. But since all staff are assigned to the schools, only "instructional supplies," and "various sports" accounts are at the principal's or school site council's discretion—a total of $24,422, or 0.7 percent of the school's portion of total district spending. The school exerts some control over the use of external funds.

11. Interview with principal, July 1991.

12. Interview with headmaster, August 1991.

13. Ibid.

14. FY93 Program Budget, Boston Public Schools, 24 February 1992.

15. Interview with teacher, August 1991.

16. Interview with principal, July 1991.

17. Brian Mooney and Muriel Cohen, "A Groaning, Mazelike Bureaucracy Clings to Power," *Boston Globe,* 22 May 1991.

18. Interview with principal, August 1991.

19. Muriel Leonard, principal, Trotter School, interview, 7 January 1991.

20. Interview with principal, July 1991.

21. Diego Ribadeneira, "Schools Short of Supplies: Some Boston Pupils Must Share Books," *Boston Globe,* 23 September 1991, 13–14.

22. Contract between the Boston Teachers Union and the School Committee of the City of Boston, Effective 1 September 1989 through 31 August 1992, Boston Teachers Union, 1989.

23. This is from the BPS sample school in table 7-7. The average salary for this school's particular staff complement is a function of their individual salaries and is not the same as the district wide average salary.

24. Diego Ribadeneira, "Schools Short of Supplies," 13.

25. Robert Martin, principal, McCormack School, interview, 27 August 1991.

26. For a good discussion of transfer prices, see Regina E. Herzlinger and Denise Nitterhouse, "Financial Accounting and Managerial Control for Nonprofit Organizations," 1991, unpublished manuscript, 12:4–12:5.

27. Interview with principal, July 1991.

28. For more on James Comer's educational theories that call for integrating education with a provision of social services see James P. Comer, *School Power: Implications of an Intervention Project* (New York: Free Press, 1980).

29. "School-Based Budgeting–Pilot Year Survey of Pilot Schools," Albuquerque Public Schools, Albuquerque, N.Mex., January 1987, 11.

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31. Susan Chira, "Schools Vie in a Marketplace: More 'Choice' Can Mean Less," *New York Times,* 7 January 1992.

32. Ibid.

33. Common Core Curriculum Steering Committee Recommendations, San Diego Public Schools.

34. Grading could be done over the summer in three months by a staff of 20 college students at a cost of $150,000. A full-time staff of five would be required to run the assessment program (including printing the exams from the database, selecting the students for testing, training the graders, and compiling and aggregating the results in the database.) At an average salary of

$35,000 and $175,000 in overhead (including supplies, printing, equipment, and other expenses) this would bring the total annual assessment cost to $500,000.

35. Interview with principal, July 1991.

36. Stephen Cotton, first assistant inspector general, quoted in Brian C. Mooney, "Bus Costs Ride an Upward Spiral," *Boston Globe*, 12.

37. David Armstrong and Andrea Estes, "Fed Probe Possible Fraud with Contracts," *Boston Herald*, 20 September 1991.

38. Mooney, "Bus Costs."

39. Armstrong and Estes, "Fed Probe Possible Fraud."

40. Diego Ribadeneira and Efrain Hernandez, "School Drivers Strike," *Boston Globe*, 24 September 1991.

41. Richard Jacobs, director of transportation, Boston Public Schools, interview, 21 December 1990.

42. Ibid.

43. Interview with special education teacher, August 1991.

44. Mooney, "Bus Costs."

45. *The Boston Public Schools*, Northeastern University, 2:27.

46. Ibid., 2:20.

47. Ibid., 2:23

48. Ibid., 2:24

49. Ibid., 2:28.

50. Ibid.

51. Eric A. Hanushek, "The Impact of Differential Expenditures on School Performance," *Educational Researcher*, vol. 18, no. 4 (May 1989): 47.

52. Ibid., 49.

53. Ibid., 50.

54. Ibid.

55. Staff member, McCormack Middle School, telephone interview, 25 March 1992.

Chapter 8: Special Education

1. Paul Peterson quoted in R. Shep Melnick, "Separation of Powers and the Strategy of Rights: The Expansion of Special Education," paper presented at the Olin-Bradley Conference on the New Politics of Public Policy, 12–14 April 1990, 3.

2. John C. Pittenger and Peter Kuriloff, "Educating the Handicapped: Reforming a Radical Law," *The Public Interest* 66 (Winter 1982): 73.

3. Ibid., 90.

4. *Thirteenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., 1991, xv.

5. Melnick, "Separation of Powers," 1. In 1977, there were 179,000 teachers. *Thirteenth Annual Report*, U.S. Department of Education, A-145. In 1989, the most recent year for which data are available, there were 286,546 special education teachers nationwide serving children ages 6–21.

6. *Thirteenth Annual Report,* U.S. Department of Education, A-44.

7. A. Joseph DeNucci, *The State Auditor's Report on Special Education in Massachusetts,* Auditor of the Commonwealth, Boston, 27 March 1991, 31.

8. *Thirteenth Annual Report,* U.S. Department of Education, A-44, A-4 (students served); *Digest of Education Statistics, 1991,* National Center for Education Statistics, 51 (public school enrollment).

9. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education,* 21.

10. Ibid., 22.

11. Office of Special Education, Boston Public Schools, 11 March 1992. Enrollment, all prototypes, is 13,399 of 58,516, as of February 1992.

12. *Locked In/ Locked Out: Tracking and Placement Practices in Boston Public Schools,* Massachusetts Advocacy Center, Boston, March 1990, 66–67: "While African-American students comprise approximately 50 percent of all Boston students, they represent: 74.4 percent of the L/AB-Learning Disabled category; 66.1 percent of the L/AB category; 63.6 percent of the L/AB Resource Room category; 59.6 percent of the L/AB Cluster category; 62.7 percent of the SAR category; [and] 60.9 percent of the SAR-Resource Room category."

13. Muriel Cohen, Brian C. Mooney, and Diego Ribadeneira, "A Circle of Disservice: Mandated Programs Fall Short of Objectives While Straining the System," *Boston Globe,* 20 May 1991.

14. Gillian Fulcher, *Disabling Policies? A Comparative Approach to Education Policy and Disability* (New York: The Falmer Press, 1989), 141.

15. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education,* 136–139.

16. Cohen, Mooney, and Ribadeneira, "A Circle of Disservice."

17. Office of Special Education, Boston Public Schools, 11 March 1992.

18. Cohen, Mooney, and Ribadeneira, "A Circle of Disservice," cites a study by the National School Boards Association.

19. Melnick, "Separation of Powers," 1.

20. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education,* 25.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., 26.

23. Cohen, Mooney, and Ribadeneira, "A Circle of Disservice."

24. Office of Special Education, Boston Public Schools, 11 March 1992.

25. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education,* 29.

26. "Chapter 766: Special Education in Massachusetts; An Overview of Chapter 766 Program Funding and Service Delivery," Massachusetts Senate Committee on Post Audit and Oversight, 1986, vii.

27. *Managing Special Education in Boston: Quality and Compliance,* Arthur D. Little, Inc., Boston, 1991.

28. *766 Regulations,* Massachusetts Department of Education, Boston, 1991, 26.

29. *"Chapter 766,"* Senate Committee, vi.

30. Allen v. McDonough. Civ. Action No. 14948, Mass. Sup. Ct., 1976.

31. Elliot Feldman, senior officer, office of special education, Boston Public Schools, interview, 3 December 1990.

32. *766 Regulations,* Massachusetts Department of Education, (Section 322.4), 30.

33. Feldman, interview.

34. Address by Frank Torres to students and faculty at the Heller School, Brandeis University, 27 January 1983; Bonnie S. Hausman "Mandates Without Money: Negotiated Enforcement of Special Education Regulations," (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Politics, Brandeis University, 1985), 254.

35. Ibid.

36. Fulcher, *Disabling Policies?* 129.

37. Feldman, interview.

38. Ibid.

39. David Neal and David Kirp in Melnick, "Separation of Powers," 6.

40. Ibid., 21.

41. Melnick, "Separation of Powers," 66.

42. Pittenger and Kuriloff, "Educating the Handicapped," 88.

43. Armstrong v. Kline (the original case) was appealed as Battle v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1980) 629f.2d U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit.

44. Pittenger and Kuriloff, "Educating the Handicapped," 88.

45. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education,* 24.

46. *766 Regulations,* Massachusetts Department of Education, (Section 310.1), 19.

47. Interview with principal, July 1991.

48. Feldman, interview.

49. Hausman, "Mandates Without Money," 85.

50. *Chapter 766,* Senate Committee, 132.

51. Fulcher, *Disabling Policies?* 144. See Hugh Mehan et al., "Identifying Handicapped Students" in S. B. Bachrach, ed., *Organizational Behavior in Schools and School Districts* (New York: Praeger Press, 1981).

52. Office of Special Education, Boston Public Schools, 25 February 1992; Program Budget FY92, Budget Department, Boston Public Schools, 24 February 1992.

53. Interview with principal, August 1991.

54. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education,* 97.

55. Ibid., 101.

56. Ibid., 113–115.

57. *Managing Special Education,* Arthur D. Little Inc., 30–31.

58. Ibid., 36.

59. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education,* 53. A survey of special education directors in Massachusetts conducted as part of the Massachusetts State Auditor's report on Chapter 766 found that 86 percent of the directors said teachers were the most frequent initiators of referrals.

60. Rachelle G. Cohen, "Special Ed: A Good Idea Run Amok," *Boston Herald,* 21 August 1990.

61. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education,* 34–35.

62. Interview with principal, July 1991.

63. *Locked In/Locked Out,* Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 61–62.

64. The cohort dropout rate is the percentage of students starting grade nine who do not finish high school.

65. Cohen, "Special Ed." The annual dropout rate is the percentage of students who leave school each year.

66. *Thirteenth Annual Report,* U.S. Department of Education, A6.

67. Office of Special Education, Boston Public Schools, 11 March 1992.

68. *766 Regulations,* Massachusetts Department of Education, (Section 104.0), 1.

69. Margaret M. Noel and Bruce C. Fuller are quoted in Fulcher, *Disabling Policies?* 150. See Margaret M. Noel and Bruce C. Fuller, "The Social Policy Construction of Special Education: The Impact of State Characteristics on Identification and Integration of Handicapped Children," (1985) *RASE.*

70. Carl Milofsky is quoted in Fulcher, *Disabling Policies?* 137. See Carl Milofsky, *Special Education: A Sociological Study of California Programs* (New York: Praeger, 1976), 156.

71. See Fulcher, *Disabling Policies?* 136, for a discussion of Milofsky's research.

72. Milofsky is quoted in Fulcher, *Disabling Policies?* 138. See Milofsky, *Special Education,* 157.

73. *Special Education in Boston,* Court Monitor's Report, Suffolk Superior Court, March 1982, 16.

74. *Special Education: Report Submitted to Governor Michael S. Dukakis,* Interagency Working Group on Special Education, Boston, 1988–89.

75. *Managing Special Education,* Arthur D. Little Inc., 21.

76. Ibid., 20.

77. Ibid., 30.

78. Based on 1985–1986 data. *Locked In/Locked Out,* Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 6, 60.

79. Ibid., 74.

80. Interview with special education teacher, August 1991.

81. Robert Martin, principal, McCormack School, interview, 27 August 1991.

82. Cohen, "Special Ed."

83. Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71B (Section 2).

84. *Managing Special Education,* Arthur D. Little Inc., 21.

85. Massachusetts Department of Education projections. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education,* 31.

86. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education,* 19.

87. Ibid., 46.

88. Linda Nathan, assistant director, Fenway School, interview, 4 January 1991.

89. Interview with headmaster, August 1991.

90. Edward Moscovitch, telephone interview, 10 February 1992. This idea will be developed in a book on special education that will be published by Pioneer Institute.

91. Kim Marshall, principal, Mather School, interview, 11 December 1990.

92. Interview with teacher, August 1992.

93. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education,* 52; *Managing Special Education,* Arthur D. Little Inc., 22.

94. Interview with principal, August 1991.

95. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education,* 54, 136–139. Massachusetts special education enrollment, as a percentage of total enroll-

ment, varies considerably more than 50 percent across districts, based on 1988 data. Even across comparable urban districts, the differences in enrollment rates are striking: Springfield's special education enrollment, as a percentage of total enrollment, is 37.4 percent lower than Boston's.

96. *Chapter 766*, Senate Committee, vii.

97. Federal legislation: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, (Section 601 [c]). Massachusetts legislation: Chapter 71B, (Section 2).

98. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education*, 39. "Seventy respondents felt the 'maximum feasible benefit' standard by which students are placed in appropriate services should be changed to reflect the federal standard, i.e., 'free appropriate.'"

99. Interview with principal, August 1991.

100. *Managing Special Education*, Arthur D. Little, 29.

101. Interview with principal, July 1991.

102. *Special Education: Report*, Interagency Working Group on Special Education, 24.

103. *Chapter 766*, Senate Committee, 49.

104. Medicaid Catastrophic Coverage Act, P. L. 100-360.

105. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education*, 63-70.

106. *Locked In/Locked Out*, Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 68.

107. Interview with principal, July 1991.

108. Interview with special education teacher, August 1991.

109. Interview with principal, August 1991.

110. *Out of the Mainstream: Education of Disabled Youth in Massachusetts*, Massachusetts Advocacy Center, Boston, 1987, 35.

111. DeNucci, *State Auditor's Report on Special Education*, 35.

112. *Out of the Mainstream*, Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 36.

113. Interview with special education teacher, August 1991.

114. Fulcher, *Disabling Policies?* See 127–130 for Fulcher's discussion of Bilken et al.

115. Interview with principal, July 1991.

116. Interview with program administrator, August 1991.

117. Ellen S. Raphael, "Per Pupil Expenditures for Special Education: To Whom Are Resources Provided?" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1988), 113–114. Massachusetts Advocacy Center also contends mainstreaming will save money (*Out of the Mainstream*, 41). They cite James S. Kakalik et al., *The Cost of Special Education, Summary of Study Findings* (Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, 1981), prepared for the U.S. Department of Education; Margaret C. Wang and J. W. Birch, "Comparison of a Full Time Mainstreaming Program and a Resource Room Approach," *Exceptional Children*, vol. 51, no. 1 (September 1984): 35–39; Daniel D. Sage and Leonard C. Burrelo, *Policy Management in Special Education* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1986).

118. Moscovitch, interview.

119. "Schools Wrangle with Expense of Special Needs Programs," *Boston Globe*, 3 November 1990.

120. *Managing Special Education*, Arthur D. Little Inc., 51–52.

Chapter 9: Bilingual Education

1. Linda Chavez, *Out of the Barrio: Toward a New Politics of Hispanic Assimilation* (U.S.A.: Basic Books, 1991), 12.

2. Bilingual Education Department, Boston Public Schools, 25 February 1992; October Report, Massachusetts Department of Education, 1991.

3. Christine H. Rossell and J. Michael Ross, "The Social Science Evidence on Bilingual Education," *Journal of Law and Education* 15 (4 November 1986): 386.

4. *Civil Rights Act of 1964*.5. Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563, (1974).6. Kenji Hakuta, *Mirror of Language: The Debate on Bilingualism* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 201. See H. Teitelbaum and R. J. Hiller, "The Legal Perspective," in *Bilingual Education: Current Perspectives* 3 (Arlington, Virginia: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1977): 8.

7. Diane Ravitch, *The Schools We Deserve: Reflections on the Educational Crisis of Our Time* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 269.

8. Hakuta, *Mirror of Language*, 200–202.

9. Rosalie Pedalino Porter, *Forked Tongue: The Politics of Bilingual Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 31.

10. Rossell and Ross, "The Social Science Evidence," 390. They cite Northwest Arctic School District v. Califano, No. A077-216 (D. Alaska, Sept. 29, 1978).

11. Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71A (Section 2).

12. Rossell and Ross, "The Social Science Evidence," 400.

13. Hakuta, *Mirror of Language*, 221. See Christina Bratt Paulston, *Bilingual Education: Theories and Issues* (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1980), 41.

14. Rossell and Ross, "The Social Science Evidence," 400.

15. Porter, *Forked Tongue*, 62–63.

16. Hakuta, *Mirror of Language*, 219.

17. Rossell and Ross, "The Social Science Evidence."

18. Ibid., 398–400.

19. Ibid., 399–400, 403–404.

20. Ibid., 404. The Ottawa experiments are documented in H. Stern et al., *Three Approaches to Teaching French: Evaluation and Overview of Studies Related to Federally Funded Extension of the Second Language Learning (French) Programs in the Carleton and Ottawa School Boards*, Ontario Ministry of Education, Toronto, 1976.

21. Rossell and Ross, "The Social Science Evidence," 409. See Fred Genesee, "The Suitability of Immersion Programs for all Children," *Canadian Modern Language Review*, vol. 32 (1967).

22. Rossell and Ross, "The Social Science Evidence," 413.

23. Malcolm N. Danoff et al., *Evaluation of the Impact of ESEA Title VII Spanish/English Bilingual Education Program*, American Institutes for Research, Palo Alto, California, 1977, 1978, 3 vols., 415, 493, 3550.

24. Jim Cummins, *Empowering Minority Students* (Sacramento, Calif.: California Association for Bilingual Education, 1989), 90–91.

25. Rossell and Ross, "The Social Science Evidence," 409. See William Tickunoff, *An Emerging Description of Successful Bilingual Instruction: Executive Summary of Part I of the SBIF Study*, Far West Laboaratory for Educational Research and Development, San Francisco, California, 1983.

26. J. Ramirez et al., *Final Report: Longitudinal Study of Structured Immersion Strategy, Early-Exit and Late-Exit Transitional Bilingual Education Programs for Language-Minority Children*, Aguirre International, San Mateo, California, 1991, 2:641, 653–654.

27. Christine Rossell, "Nothing Matters? A Critique of the Ramirez. et al. Longitudinal Study of Instructional Programs for Language Minority Children," 3, paper to be published in *Bilingual Research Quarterly*.

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29. Ibid., 33.

30. Ibid., 23.

31. Ibid., 25.

32. Ibid., 26.

33. Ibid., 18, 39.

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36. Staff member, English as a Second Language Program, Fairfax County Public Schools, telephone interview, March 1992.

37. Christine Rossell, "The Effectiveness of Educational Alternatives for Limited English Proficient Children," in Gary Imhoff, *Learning in Two Languages* (New Jersey: Transaction Publisher, 1990), 72.

38. Rossell, "The Effectiveness of Educational Alternatives," 99. See Stephen Krashen and Douglas Biber, *On Course: Bilingual Education's Success in California* (Sacramento, Calif.: California Association for Bilingual Education, 1988).

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41. Bilingual Education Department, Boston Public Schools, 25 February 1992.

42. "The Status of Transitional Bilingual Education Programs, Annual Report FY90," Bureau of Equity and Language Services, Massachusetts Department of Education, 1991, 11.

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49. For an analysis of Hakuta's recommendations, see Porter, *Forked Tongue,* 194–202.

50. Hakuta, *Mirror of Language,* 224.

51. Based on average growth from 1983 through 1992. See table 9-1.

52. Porter, *Forked Tongue,* 66. Keith Baker and Christine Rossell, "An Implementation Problem: Specifying the Target Group for Bilingual Education," *Educational Policy,* 1 (2 [1987]): 263.

53. Ibid., 67. See also *Review of Federal Bilingual Education Programs in Texas*(Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Education, 1982), 21; R. Berdan, A. So, and A. Sanchez, *Language Among the Cherokee, Patterns of Language Use in Northeastern Oklahoma* (Los Alamitos, Calif.: National Center for Bilingual Research, 1982) Part I preliminary report; H. Duly and M. Burt, "The Relative Proficiency of Limited English Proficient Students," in *Georgetown University Roundtable on Language and Linguistics,* ed. J. Alatis (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1980).

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55. Porter, *Forked Tongue,* 67.

56. Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71A (Section 3).

57. Boston Public School Profiles, 1990–91. Dropouts, as defined in the source, are those students who "leave after achieving age 16, marry, go into the military, or become employed." The figure does not include students who are registered but never report.

58. Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563, (1974).

59. Charles Glenn, "Equity and Bilingual Education," unpublished paper, 30 June 1985, 11.

60. Ibid., 12, 14.

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Index

Alaska 236
Albuquerque (New Mexico) 182
Alvarado, Anthony 91–92
Alves, Michael 4
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) 260
American Institutes for Research (AIR) 239, 249
Armor, David 16, 18
Arthur D. Little, Inc. xv, 204, 215, 217, 225, 231
Assessment
  School 75, 121, 144–154, 185–187
Assignment
  Student, in Boston 2, 11–13, 15–18, 68
Atlanta (Georgia) 157–158

Baltimore (Maryland) 190, 259
Banks, James 273
Bell, Derrick 19
Berger, Peter 29, 263
Berkeley (California) 243–244
Bilingual education
  AIR Reports 239, 249
  Bilingual Education Act of 1988 235, 267
  Chapter 71A 233, 236, 267
  English as a Second Language 234, 239, 242–244, 298
  in Fairfax (Virginia) 242
  Lau remedies 235–236, 247
  Lau v. Nichols 235
  Mainstreaming 236, 241, 248–255, 257–258, 261–262, 264, 266, 268
  Ramirez report 240, 242, 247, 264–265
  Structured immersion 234, 238–244, 247, 253, 256–257, 267
  Submersion 237–239, 243–244, 256
  Teresa P. v. Berkeley Unified School District 243
  Time on task principle 238, 241, 244, 254
  Transitional Bilingual Education law (Massachusetts) 233, 236
  Two-way bilingual programs 118, 234, 245, 248, 267–268
Bishopshalt School (Britain) 184
Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts 155
Black, Theodore M. 7
Boston Compact 48
Boston Public Schools
  Department of Equity 110, 139, 185, 195, 284

  Department of Implementation 11–13, 15, 23–24, 27, 55, 193
Boston Schools, Elementary and Middle
  Dearborn School 28
  James G. Blaine Public 87
  John W. McCormack School 98
  Martin Luther King Middle School 20, 49
  Mary E. Curley School 229
  Mather School 30, 67, 93–98
  McKinley School 213, 280
  Oliver Wendell Holmes School 99
  Timilty School 28
  Wheatley School 13, 28
Boston Schools, High schools
  Boston English 103, 105–107
  Cathedral High 64, 79, 156
  East Boston High 13, 250
  Fenway Middle College High School 103–107, 221, 287
  Jamaica Plain High School 17, 105
  Madison Park High School 12
Breen, Reverend Vincent 80
Brookline (Massachusetts) 16, 97, 107, 283
Brown v. Board of Education 7
Bush, George 1
Bush, Jamie 94
Busing 4, 7–8, 11, 14–18, 21, 192

California
  Department of Education 243–244, 271
Cambridge (Massachusetts) 4, 16, 23, 187
Canada 244
Cartwright, Madeline 87–88, 90
Catholic schools 30, 64, 66, 75–80
Certification
  Alternative 277–278
  See also Teachers.
Chapter 150E (Massachusetts General Laws) 141, 184
Chapter 188 (Massachusetts General Laws) 183, 217
Chapter 30B (Massachusetts General Laws) 182, 184
Chapter 636 (Massachusetts General Laws) 68
Chapter 71A (Massachusetts General Laws) 233, 236, 267
Chapter 727 (Massachusetts General Laws) 217
Chapter 766 (Massachusetts General Laws) 198–199, 203–204, 207–208, 210–211, 215, 223–224
Chavez, Linda 262–263
Chelsea (Massachusetts) 29, 127, 303
Chicago (Illinois) 95
Chubb, John 36–37, 58, 78
Cincinnati (Ohio) 157–158, 190
Citywide Educational Coalition (CWEC) xv, 22, 51–52, 143, 150
Civil Rights Act of 1964 7, 21, 235
Cleveland (Ohio) 157–158
Cluster model 177
Coalition of Essential Schools 107, 118, 152
Coleman, James 75–78
Collective bargaining 42–43, 45, 58, 138–142, 279, 281, 286–287, 291, 294, 297–298, 300–301
Colloredo-Mansfeld, Ferdinand 38
Controlled Choice xvi, 1–2, 4–7, 11, 14, 18, 21–22, 28, 37, 192
Coons, John E. 2, 29
Council of Great City Schools 156, 158–159
Court cases
  Allen v. McDonough 205–206, 215
  Armstrong v. Kline 208
  Brown v. Board of Education 7
  Casteneda v. Pickard 264
  Lau v. Nichols 235
  Swann v. Charlotte Mecklenberg Board of Education 8

  Teresa P. v. Berkeley Unified School District 243
  United States v. Jefferson County Board of Education 8
Cummins, Jim 239, 252
Cunningham, Roger 12
CWEC
  See Citywide Educational Coalition.

Dade County (Florida) 38–40, 43
Daniels, Mary Brown 46
Denver (Colorado) 157–158, 190
Desegregation 7
  Brown v. Board of Education 7
  Swann v. Charlotte Mecklenberg Board of Education 8
  United States v. Jefferson County Board of Education 8
Desegregation legislation
  Chapter 636 (Massachusetts General Laws) 68
  Racial Imbalance Act of 1965 10
Desmond, Charles 20
Diez, Mary 273
Dooley, Ted 48
Doyle, Denis 122–123
Drucker, Peter 89
Durkheim, Emile 81

Edmonds, Ron 94
Education of All Handicapped Children Act 198
Educational Technology Center (Harvard University) 186
Elementary and Secondary Education Act 8
Ellison, Catherine 11, 23
English as a Second Language
  See Bilingual education.
Epstein, Noel 255

Fairfax (Virginia) 242
Fall River (Massachusetts) 27, 302
Feldman, Eliot 205–207, 209
Fernandez, Joseph 44
Finn, Chester 272
Fliegel, Seymour 92, 121, 126
Focus schools 66–67, 70, 72, 75
Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution 4
Fremont (California) 244

Gardner, Howard 248
Garlington, Barbara 20
Garrity, Arthur 9–10, 19
Giddens, Anthony 85
Glazer, Nathan 8, 21, 124, 259–260
Glenn, Charles 4, 12, 249–251, 264
The Good High School (Lightfoot, Sara Lawrence) 80
Goodlad, John 273
Greer, Peter 127
Gutmann, Stephanie 44–45, 61

Hakuta, Kenji 237, 245, 248
Harris, Charlotte 292, 302
High School and Beyond, 1980 Survey 75, 78
Hillingdon School (Britain) 184
Homer, Ronald 20
Houston (Texas) 160
Humphrey, Hubert 8

In Search of Excellence (Peters and Waterman) 67
Individual contracting
  See Teachers.

Jencks, Christopher 124
Jenifer, Franklyn 19–20
Jenni, Roger 40
Johnson, Douglas 24
Johnson, Susan Moore 59, 132–133, 143

Kansas 190, 223
Kennedy, Senator Ted 1
Kidder, Tracy 111
Kolderie, Ted 139
Kramer, Rita 272, 274

Lasch, Christopher 273, 275
Lawrence (Massachusetts) 80, 202–203, 302
Leadership
  Charismatic 84–86, 113
Legislation, Massachusetts
  Chapter 30B 182, 184
  Chapter 71A 233, 236, 267
  Chapter 150E 141
  Chapter 636 68
  Chapter 727 217
  Chapter 766 198–199, 203–205, 207–208, 210–211, 215, 217, 223–224
  Proposition 2 1/2 217
  Racial Imbalance Act of 1965 10
Legislation, United States
  Bilingual Education Act of 1988 235, 267
  Civil Rights Act of 1964 7, 21, 235
  Education of All Handicapped Children Act 198
  Elementary and Secondary Education Act 8
  Voting Rights Act xv
Lemann, Nicholas 26
Leonard, Steven 20, 48–50, 292
Levin, Henry 145
Lieberman, Myron 35–36, 61, 136
Lightfoot, Sara Lawrence 80
Lindquist, Karin M. 43–44
Lipsitz, Joan 80
Los Angeles (California) 43

Marshall, Kim 67–68, 93–98, 150, 222, 283
Marshall, Robert 155
Martin Luther King Middle School 20, 49
Martin, Robert 98–102, 128, 173, 197, 275, 286, 291, 295
Massachusetts
  Division of Purchased Services 211
  Office of Human Services 211
  Rate Setting Commission 211
Massachusetts Advocacy Center xv, 149–150, 204, 206, 215–216, 256
Massachusetts,
  Department of Education
  Bureau of Educational Opportunity 32
  Office of Educational Equity 4, 11–12
Mauriel, John J. 43–44
"Maximum feasible benefit"
  See Special education.
Meier, Deborah 92
Melnick, Shep R. 207
Metropolitan Council for Equal Educational Opportunity (Metco) 32
Miami (Florida) 39, 202, 260
Milwaukee (Wisconsin) 4, 21, 157–158, 260
Minnesota 32, 40
Moe, Terry 36–37, 58, 78
Monteiro, Manuel 284–285, 290, 297
Morgan, Richard E. 7–8
Moscovitch, Edward 230
Myatt, Larry 103–108, 287

Nathan, Linda 103–107, 221
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) xv, 260
The National Commission on Testing and Public Policy 149, 151
Neuhaus, Richard John 29, 263
New Jersey

  Alternative Teacher Certification 277
  Department of Education 277
New Orleans (Louisiana) 157–158
New York
  Curriculum 259
New York City Schools
  Brooklyn (P.S. 41) 44, 80
  East Harlem (District 4) 18, 35–36, 91–92, 121, 126–127
Newman, Harvey 45
Nieto, Sonia 253
North Carolina 223

O'Neil, Martha 299–300

Parent Information Centers 11–12, 22, 187, 193
Parochial schools 1, 14, 19, 32, 36, 65–66, 75–76, 79, 81, 200
Peterkin, Roger 21
Peters, Tom 67
Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) 84, 87–88, 157–158
Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) 157–158, 190
Pope John Paul II 140
Porter, Rosalie 237, 252, 255, 257, 266
Portland (Oregon) 157–158
Poussaint, Alvin 20
Proposition 2 1/2
  See Legislation, Massachusetts.

Racial quotas 7–9, 11, 14, 24–25, 69, 252
RAND Corporation (California) 30, 60–61, 66–72
Ravitch, Diane 10, 21, 145, 147
Raynolds, Harold 12
Reading Recovery (Mather School) 93, 95, 123
Robertson, Piedad 106
Rochester (New York) 43
Rosow, Jerome 61–62, 142
Ross, Herbert 44–45
Ross, J. Michael 234, 237–239, 258
Rossell, Christine 234, 237–244, 258, 264–266

San Diego (California) 146, 185–186
San Francisco (California) 190
San Jose (California) 244
Sawhill, Isabel 34
School choice
  Controlled choice xvi, 1–2, 4–7, 11, 14, 18, 21–22, 37
  Interdistrict 1, 30–35
  Metco 32
School site council 39–44, 48–52, 54, 56
School-based budgeting 168, 182–185
School-based management xvi–xvii, 1, 38–63, 168–170, 182, 195
Schwartz, Judah 153
Seattle (Washington) 157–158, 190
Shared decision-making 38–39, 41–46, 49, 51–56, 60–61
Smith, Sidney 103, 107, 134
South Deerfield (Massachusetts) 231
Sowell, Thomas 19
Special education
  Allen v. McDonough 205–206, 215
  Armstrong v. Kline 208
  Chapter 766 198–199, 203–205, 207–211, 215, 217, 223–224
  Due process 110, 207, 210, 295, 297
  Education of All Handicapped Children Act 198
  Individual Education Plan (IEP) 110, 179, 195, 199, 204–206, 210, 212, 226, 231
  Mainstreaming 53–54, 109, 119, 178, 200, 210, 214, 225–230
  Prereferral 199, 215–216, 223
  Prototypes 199–200, 203, 217, 227

  Staff 178, 195, 211–216, 224–225
Special Needs Advisory Council 206
Spillane, Robert 93, 296
Sponsoring council 116, 118–121, 181, 187
Spring, William 26, 202–203, 303
Springfield (Massachusetts) 202–203, 303
St. Louis (Missouri) 157, 190
Staff
  Development 48, 179, 292–294
  Recruitment 60, 118, 139, 279–280
  Termination 136, 279, 294–297
STAR Program 6–7, 13–14
Structured immersion
  See Bilingual education.
Student/Sponsor Partnership Program 79
Successful Schools for Young Adults (Lipsitz) 80
Supportive Academic Remediation (SAR) 229
Swakeley's (Britain) 185

Teachers
  Certification 84, 221, 277–278
  Compensation 43, 136–138, 142, 170, 281–282, 292, 298
  Evaluation 289–290
  Individual contracting 138
  Private practice 139
  Recruitment 112, 282–284
  Seniority 6, 52, 60, 134, 141, 170–171, 283, 286–287, 298
Testing
  Advanced Placement 152
  Bias in 145, 151, 153–154
  Curriculum Reference Tests 150
  Metropolitan Achievement Tests (MATS) 159
  National Commission on Testing and Public Policy 149, 151
  Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) 14, 129, 276
  See also Assessment.
Thernstrom, Abigail 12, 18, 30, 35, 65, 79, 123, 145
Timilty School 28
Timmons, Jeffry A. 126
Torres, Frank 206
Traies, Jane 185

Unions
  Boston Teachers Union 38, 57, 140–141, 279, 297, 299–300
  Collective bargaining 42–45, 138–142, 281, 286–287, 291, 294, 297–298
United States
  Department of Education 186, 202, 240
  Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 8
  Office of Education 4, 8, 11–12
United States Constitution
  Fourteenth Amendment 4
United States Supreme Court 7–8, 21, 208, 235, 250

Voting Rights Act xv
Vouchers 2, 32–33, 37, 300

Walker, Liz 111
Weber, Max 85
West Hartford (Connecticut) 147
WICAT Computer System 275
Willie, Charles 4, 14, 21
Wilson, James Q. 81, 111–112
Worcester (Massachusetts) 202–203, 302

Zager, Robert 61–62, 142
Zoned schools 66–72, 212

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